■ 2bU! / C1

Father's Day scrapbook: Tribute to main man in our lives; you rock, dad!

■ NEWS / A2

RP envoy to US resigns; Bert Romulo, Lauro Baja eyed to take over post

■ INQ7

Forester board exam: 203 out of 500 pass; visit www.inq7.net

■ SPORTS / A27

Czechs blank Americans; Italy, Australia triumph in World Cup

Bush pays surprise visit to Iraq, meets new PM

BAGHDAD, IRAQ—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH met newly named Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in a surprise visit to Baghdad on Tuesday to discuss next steps in the troubled three-year-old war. The dramatic move came as Bush sought to bolster support for Iraq's fledgling government and US war policy at home.

Bush traveled to violence-rattled Baghdad less than a week after a US air strike killed terror chief

BUSH/ A10

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, June 14, 2006 ★★★ 6 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 186 P18 website: www.inq7.net

City's adopted herons named Mack, Kathy

By Tarra V. Quismundo
Metro

KELAN KAYA ANG BINYAG NG MGA IBON ?

THEY COULD HAVE BEEN named Tweety and Big Bird, or Suri and Shiloh.

Instead, the two black-crowned herons that Makati City adopt-

CITY'S/ A10

4th explosion rocks Metro

Gov't allows Lafayette to open for 30 days

By Blanche S. Rivera and Christine Gaylican
in Manila
and Bobby Q. Labalan
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

AFTER SEVEN MONTHS OF SUSPENDed operations due to the illegal discharge of mine tailings, Australian mining firm Lafayette Mining Inc. has been allowed to conduct a 30-day test run of its facilities in Rapu-Rapu, Albay.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday lifted temporarily its suspension order to check if the remedial measures put in place by Lafayette would work.

Lafayette would be allowed to start its test-run only after making an escrow deposit of the P10.4-million fine imposed by the Pollution Adjudication Board for its violation of the Clean Water Act following the mine spills on Oct. 11 and 31 last year.

The company had filed a motion for reconsideration in the PAB and refused to pay the fine until the case was resolved. It paid only the P300,000 penalty for violating the conditions of its environmental compliance certificate.

"The DENR came to the conclusion that the two tailings spills were preventable, that Lafayette was guilty of operational, technical and management lapses, and that the company's project still has to measure up to the standards of responsible mining," Environment Secretary Angelo T. Reyes said at a press conference.

The DENR, however, said it felt that "the best option to take is to allow Lafayette to resume operations subject to certain stringent conditions," as an abandoned open-pit mine like the one in Rapu-Rapu would be less environmentally

GOV'T/ A7

"WHEN DEATH PENALTY WAS POPULAR:" Lauro Vizconde and Martin Diño of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption present at a pro-death penalty press conference the INQUIRER's Jan. 12, 1999, issue with this Page 1 photo showing then Vice President Macapagal walking hand in hand with rape victim "Baby" Echegaray during a rally for the reimposition of the death penalty. Then First Lady Loi Ejercito is at left, behind is now Sen. Jamby Madrigal. PDI PHOTO FILE

'Death penalty is OK while popular'

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Christian V. Esguerra

IT WON'T BE SMOOTH SAILING FOR THE planned abolition of the death penalty law, with opposing voices gaining volume.

More than 100 relatives of victims of heinous crimes yesterday registered their indignation at a rally at Liwasang Bonifacio in Manila.

The group began to mass near the Andres Bonifacio monument at around 3 p.m., carrying placards with such messages as "Justice is dead" and "PGMA has no political will."

And Dante Jimenez, founding chair of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC), sounded a warning: "Even if President Macapagal-Arroyo signs the bill abolishing the death penalty, we will never respect it."

"[Lawmakers] did not even bother to consult the victims when they passed this bill," he told reporters.

The Philippine Council of Evangelical

DEATH/ A8

Same group owns blast in police camp

By Luige A. del Puerto and Jocelyn R. Uy

THE MODUS OPERANDI was familiar—an explosion disrupting the early morning rush but injuring no one.

But yesterday's blast—the fourth in Metro Manila since last week—occurred right inside Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City, the headquarters of the National Capital Region Police Office.

The explosion left a small crater under a Special Weapons and Tactics van that had been parked a few feet away from the Regional Special Action Unit (RSAU) for nearly three months. It also damaged the van's fender and flattened its right rear tire.

Philippine National Police Deputy Director General Avelino Razon acknowledged that whoever had planted the explosive device—probably a pillbox, according to Supt. Roberto Villanueva, RSAU group director—was capable of penetrating a secure place like Camp Bagong Diwa.

Asked if people with access to the camp, such as soldiers and policemen, could have been behind the attack, Razon said: "That is part of the investigation of NCRPO—why the camp was penetrated and why it happened in a camp … That will be a vital component of the investigation."

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao has ordered Director Marcelo Ele, head of the Directorate for Investigation and

4TH EXPLOSION/ A6

THE WORLD'S WORST ERUPTION in the second half of the 20th century and the largest to affect a densely populated area did this to a barangay in Botolan, Zambales. PDI PHOTO FILE

15 YEARS AFTER PINATUBO

Aeta: From 'lubay' to Levi's

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SPECIAL REPORT

BOTOLAN, ZAMBALES—THE world's worst eruptions in the second half of the 20th century failed to erase the Aeta from the face of earth.

Fifteen years after Mount Pinatubo let out its biggest blasts in their ancestral abode on June 15, 1991, the Aeta population in Zambales, Pampanga and Tarlac has almost doubled from just over 50,000 at the height of the disaster, data from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in Central Luzon showed.

As survivors, the Aetas stand out among Philippine aborigines as members of a tribe that bear memories and experiences of volcanic eruptions in modern times, making them a mine of lessons in coping with disasters, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said.

In the eyes of three Aeta elders, however, there was a dying aspect to this survival.

Traditional culture, at least the kind they had practiced in their lifetimes, was lost or had faded away in post-eruption years, according to Adoracion

AETA/ A6

Zamboanga Norte RP's poorest

By Mel Lawrence de Guzman
PDI Research
and Dennis Jay C. Santos
PDI Mindanao Bureau

WHILE THE COUNTRY'S POVERTY incidence has slightly declined, Mindanao is home to seven of the 10 poorest provinces, according to the latest poverty data from the National Statistics Coordination Board (NSCB).

Moro and communist guerrillas operate in the seven Mindanao provinces on the list of the poorest provinces. On the other hand, the 10 "least poor" areas or provinces are all found in Luzon where the country's capital is located.

The NSCB based its latest poverty statistics on the final results of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) that the National Statistics Office conducted in 2003. The NSO conducts the survey every three years.

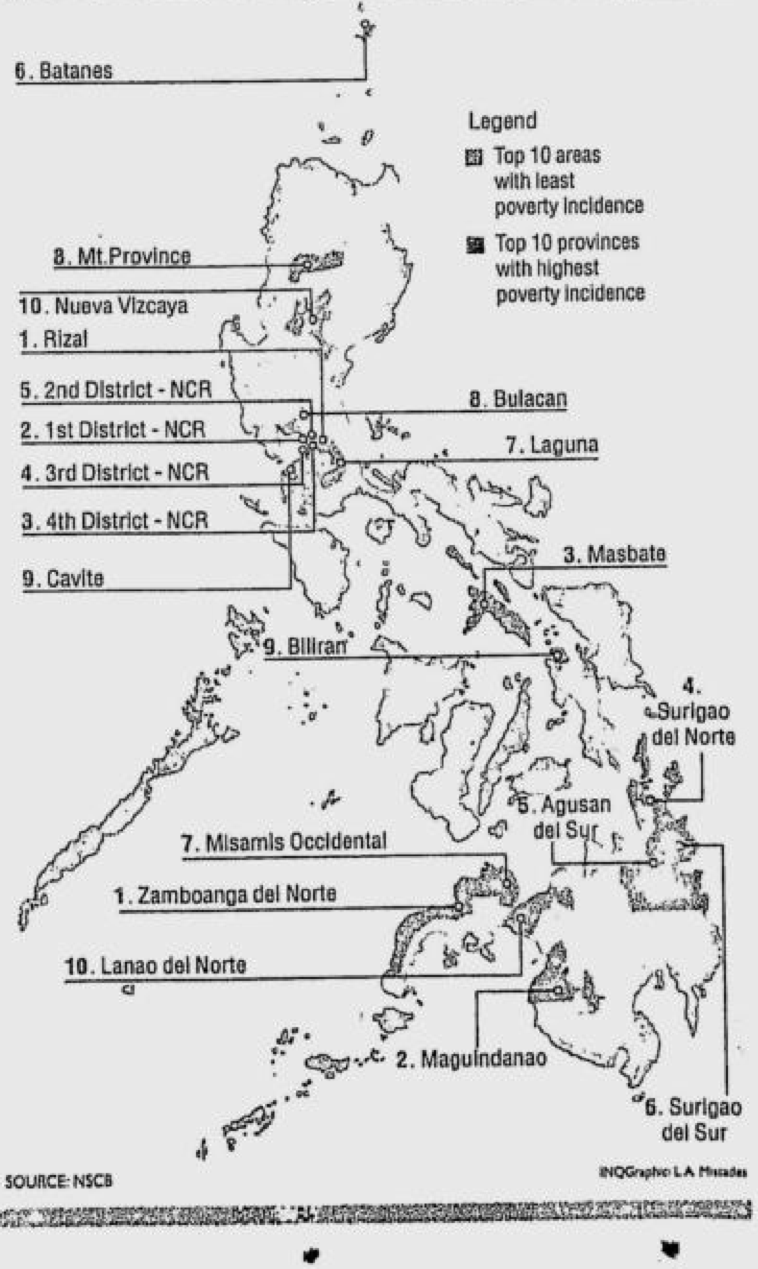
Poverty incidence refers to the proportion of families (or population) with per capita income below the poverty line or threshold, the amount needed to meet basic needs.

The NSCB put the country's annual poverty threshold for 2003 at P12,475 per person, or P34 a day.

"Generally, since 1997, there has been an increasing trend in poverty in Mindanao," said Redencion Ignacio, chief of the Spe-

ZAMBOANGA/ A8

RP'S POVERTY PICTURE



SOURCE: NSCB

INQGraphic: L.A. Mercado

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE V. PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/06/13/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

World Bank pledges to invest up to $5B in RP private sector

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCE Corp., the investment arm of the World Bank, has committed to pump in as much as $5 billion in fresh investments in private sector projects in the Philippines in the coming years.

"To date, we have invested at least $2 billion in various companies in this country. And we are willing to invest another $2 billion, or even $5 billion, in the coming years, given the right opportunities, and with willing and motivated partners from the private sector," IFC's country manager for the Philippines and Thailand Vipul Bhagat said in a press briefing yesterday.

Bhagat said IFC's future investments would be in the following vital sectors: Infrastructure, telecommunications, health care, tourism, information technology and financial services.

He added that IFC would continue to provide technical assistance and advisory services to key projects.

But since it took IFC about 40 years to invest $2 billion, Bhagat said it would take more patience to further build up its exposure in the country.

"IFC remains committed to supporting the Philippines and we will continue to forge long term partnerships with the private sector. We will continue to invest in projects that create jobs, improve people's lives while addressing environmental, social and gender concerns," Bhagat said.

IFC started investing in the Philippines in 1962, initially in Private Development Corp. of the Philippines (PDCP) and then in blue chips Manila Electric Co. and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

In recent years, IFC has prioritized efforts to deepen and diversify the local financial sector, promoting infrastructure and assisting in the growth of small and medium enterprises. Other areas which it has invested in are those sectors that harness the country's competitive human capital advantages: Agribusiness, health care, education and information technology.

From only $67 million in 2003, IFC's fresh investments in the Philippines rose to $90 million in 2004 and further to $104 million in 2005. For this year, Bhagat said fresh investments would likely top last year's.

IFC marked its 50th anniversary with a program in the Philippines focusing on the challenges and opportunities in the coming years as it provides support to local companies and expands its role in fostering economic development.

IFC Director for East Asia and the Pacific Javed Hamid pointed out that developing countries in the region were expected to grow by an average of 8 percent this year and capture over $100 billion in foreign direct investments annually. Hamid noted, however, that many people had yet to partake of this prosperity.

"For all the progress of the emerging markets, we still see extreme poverty. Some 700 million in East Asia and the Pacific still live on less than $2 a day. Even as we struggle to promote investments and create more jobs, we are still faced by signs of hunger and strife," he said.

RP envoy to US quits

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Volt Contreras

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY announced the resignation of Alberto del Rosario, the Philippine ambassador to the United States, less than a month before his tour of duty ends on July 8.

DEL ROSARIO

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye told a news briefing of Del Rosario's resignation, ostensibly because he wanted to return to the private sector, but did not say who would replace him.

A few hours after the Bunye briefing, a statement was released by President Macapagal-Arroyo saying she accepted Del Rosario's resignation "with much regret."

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo also issued a statement shortly after Bunye's announcement.

Much regret

"The President, with much regret and profoundly grateful for the contributions of Ambassador Del Rosario to the successful pursuit of Philippine foreign policy, has accepted his resignation effective on July 8, 2006," Romulo said.

A statement from Del Rosario, however, did not explicitly mention a resignation, contrary to the Palace and Romulo announcements.

"I have been recalled and will therefore end my posting as the Philippine ambassador to the United States effective July 8. My departure from Washington D.C. shortly thereafter will enable my early return to the private sector," Del Rosario said in a statement released through the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Since last year, Del Rosario's Washington post has been at the center of a "musical chairs" shuffling of government positions, offered as a plum to people being inveigled into joining the government or encouraged to vacate other posts.

Bunye refused to comment on speculations that the President was considering as Del Rosario's replacement either Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo or Lauro Baja, the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Baja is himself being replaced at the UN by former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

Bunye also denied that the President had been dangling the plum post to other allies like former Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes who only agreed to give up his post, which went to former Antipolo Rep. Ronaldo Puno, after he was appointed environment secretary.

Return to private sector

"He [Del Rosario] appeared determined to return to the private sector," the press secretary said.

Bunye said the President considered Del Rosario "a good friend and a true professional." It was Ms Arroyo who appointed Del Rosario on Oct. 13, 2001.

At the DFA, spokesperson Gilberto Asuque told a press briefing that Del Rosario had expressed a desire to return to the private sector as early as two years ago.

Apparently to dispel speculations on the reasons for Del Rosario's departure, Asuque said: "There should be nothing spectacular about an ambassador ending his tour of duty."

6-year tenure

He explained that under the Foreign Service Act, diplomats are given a tenure of up to six years in a foreign assignment, during which they may have one or more postings. After this period, the envoys are recalled to serve for three years in the home office before being eligible again for another six-year tour of duty.

Political appointees like Del Rosario—who by the time he leaves Washington would only have served for five years—usually return to the private sector, he said.

Career officials, on the other hand, remain with the DFA until their retirement, he said.

The President paid tribute to Del Rosario citing his "crucial role in nurturing our relations with our key ally, broadening the frontiers of our cooperation and partnership, and seeing us through the common challenges that face both our nations."

"He left a very successful career in the private sector to join the government. He leaves government with an exemplary record as a diplomat and public servant. He has made lasting contributions to Philippine diplomacy and left an indelible mark on RP-US relations," Ms Arroyo said.

Romulo also expressed his "deep appreciation for the outstanding work and remarkable achievements" of Del Rosario.

He "had five solid and fruitful years as our representative to Washington," he said.

Replacement

He said Del Rosario had asked to be allowed to return to private life.

Amid renewed speculations last April on imminent changes in the Washington embassy, Romulo, who had just returned from a visit to the US capital, denied rumors he was about to replace Del Rosario.

"I have no interest or desire for any ambassadorial assignment," he said at the time.

The 66-years-old Del Rosario received all of his education, from primary school to university, in the United States. He earned a degree in Economics at New York University.

Del Rosario has served as president, vice president, chair and director of more than 50 corporations and civic organizations in the Philippines.

Sanchez's men undergo lie detector test

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—CLOSE-IN SECURITY staff of Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez were undergoing polygraph tests yesterday that police described as a way to "clear them" of complicity in the failed assassination attempt on the governor.

As of mid-morning, three of Sanchez's bodyguards had submitted to a lie-detector test, while 10 more were scheduled to take it, said Senior Supt. Ricardo Padilla.

Padilla had said earlier that the explosion that ripped through Sanchez's Hummer H2 SUV and killed two of his aides on June 1 might have been an "inside job."

Among those scheduled to undergo the tests were Sanchez's regular driver, whom police had described as the key to solving the case but whose identity they have withheld. The driver could have been the "insider" that investigators believe planted the bomb in Sanchez's vehicle as he failed to report for work on the day of the bombing, Padilla said.

Padilla claimed investigators were making progress but declined to elaborate.

Asked if arrests were imminent, Padilla replied, "Naming the suspects and arresting them are two different things. We have to gather more evidence."

Meanwhile, police in Lipa City released yesterday a sketch of a man described by a witness as the one who may have planted the hand grenade that wounded at least eight people at a local market on Sunday.

Senior Supt. David Quimio, Lipa City police chief, said the man's description was provided by a witness who saw him running away after apparently placing a live grenade inside a bag hanging from the back of a parked jeepney.

As described by the witness, the man was 5'4" tall, about 40 years olds, of medium build, had "fair skin" and had a receding hairline.

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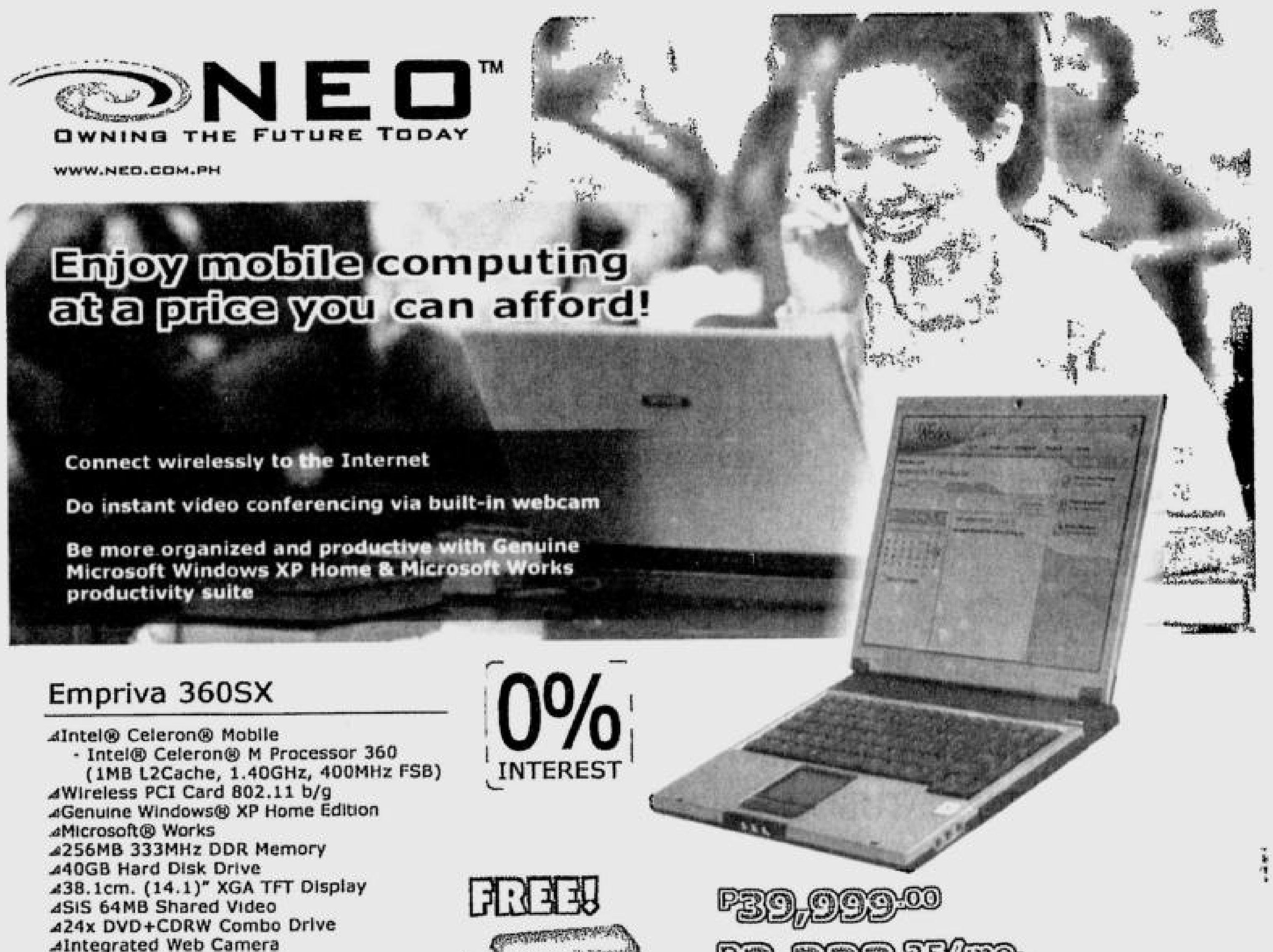

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[redacted]

DSWD plan to aid OFWs in crisis

THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL Welfare and Development has initiated an after-care program for returning overseas Filipino workers who are in crisis situations to ensure their smooth reintegration into their families and communities.

Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said President Macapagal-Arroyo had directed all relevant agencies to draw up a comprehensive after-care program for returning OFWs.

Among the services on offer at the DSWD are counseling and other psycho-social assistance, food, medicine, temporary shelter and other basic needs.

For OFWs who are unable to complete their work contracts because of abusive employers, repatriation services will be facilitated by a social welfare attaché in the case of Malaysia and social workers in Kuwait, Jeddah, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Lebanon, Hong Kong and Riyadh.

The DSWD also provides critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) for OFWs who have experienced traumatic stress in their work. CISD allows the victims to express their feelings about critical incidents or life-threatening experiences.

Cabral said returning OFWs would also be referred to the appropriate government agencies for legal and medical assistance and other services.

Returning OFWs are asked to go to any DSWD field office to avail of the after-care services.

The number of OFWs reached 500,000 in the first half of 2005 while OFW remittances in 2005 grew by 25 percent to $10.8 billion.

Cynthia D. Balana

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Carmi Martin

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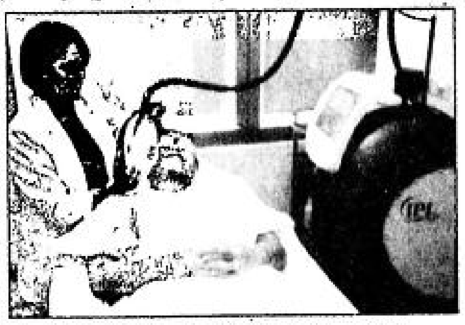
Dr. Joya performing the IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment on a client.

Restaurateur Cristina Gonzalez-Romualdez is another satisfied IPL client. She relates: "Some skin problems I had were freckles and a bit of melasma. IPL gave me a more even complexion. It helped remove the freckles and the melasma. I remember after the 3rd or 4th session, there was a big improvement. But even after the 1st session, I could already see an effect because my pores tightened. Somebody told me my skin was glowing...and this was right after an IPL treatment! The best thing about it is there's no downtime. Since I like going to the beach and going out of town, I'm always exposed to the sun. That's why I go for IPL treatments after an outing. I'm really happy with it!"

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Cristina Gonzalez-Romualdez

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PSG restricts the press

JOURNALISTS COVERING PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to the Pandacan oil depot in Manila yesterday found themselves being held back at a "holding pen" by a member of the Presidential Security Group as they watched their quarry get away.

The President and her chief of staff, Michael Defensor, apologized, and the occasion being partly about hazard preparedness, the reporters accepted it as part of the hazards of the job.

The holding area was actually a row of steel bars positioned to cordon off the media from where the President and oil company officials were standing.

After the President delivered her remarks announcing a rollback in diesel prices by 50 centavos and no price increases for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for the rest of the month, reporters rushed from behind the steel bars to follow her.

But a PSG member blocked them from leaving the holding area to the consternation of the reporters who pleaded to be let out. But the PSG man stood his ground, saying at one point that he had no instructions to let them follow the President.

The reporters were only allowed to leave the area after the President was safely inside a nearby building where she held a closed-door meeting with the oil company officials.

She then mentioned the incident with the PSG member, indicating that she had been told about it. *Christine O. Avendaño*

Oil firms cut diesel prices

FIVE OIL COMPANIES—PETRON Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Chevron Philippines Inc. (formerly, Caltex), Total (Philippines) Corp. and Seaoil Petroleum Corp.—are to roll back diesel prices by 50 centavos per liter today and have declared a moratorium on increases in the price of cooking gas up to the end of the month as a result of a cut in import duties.

This was announced yesterday by President Macapagal-Arroyo during a visit to the Pandacan depot where most of the oil companies store their refined petroleum products.

Ms Arroyo said the diesel price rollback will be maintained up to the end of the month also.

The government lowered the tariff on fuel products by one percentage point to 2 percent, under the provisions of Executive Order No. 527 issued by the President on May 12.

The order provides that the 3-percent tariff on fuel imports would be reduced to 2 percent if the regional benchmark Dubai crude hits $66 a barrel, and if the price of diesel, based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for finished products, reaches $88 a barrel.

These price levels should have been sustained for the last two weeks to merit a tariff reduction.

The next trigger points, which will bring the tariff to 1 percent, are $75 a barrel for Dubai crude and still $88 a barrel for MOPS-based diesel.

The import tariff will be scrapped altogether if Dubai crude hits $85 a barrel and MOPS-based diesel $88 a barrel.

According to the Department of Energy, although the 1-percentage-point tariff reduction would be applied to all fuel imports, the resulting savings would be applied only to the socially sensitive diesel.

Thus the rollback in diesel prices only.

Applying the resulting tariff savings only to diesel would effect a more significant reduction in its pump price, the DOE said.

"We thank the oil firms for assuring us there was enough supply of oil," Ms. Arroyo said.

"The tariff reduction of one percent is equivalent to P500 million a month and the oil companies are committed to pass it on a total of P500 million worth of savings every month," Ms Arroyo also said.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said that oil prices in the world market are in a "down trend" but noted it was "still volatile in a day to day basis."

The diesel price cuts were to take effect at 12:01 a.m. today. Eastern Petroleum Corp. effected the price adjustment as early as 12 noon yesterday.

Apart from the price cut, which would be applicable to all diesel-fed vehicles, the country's oil firms would continue giving P1-a-liter diesel discounts to the public transport sector. *Christine O. Avendaño and Abigail L. Ho*

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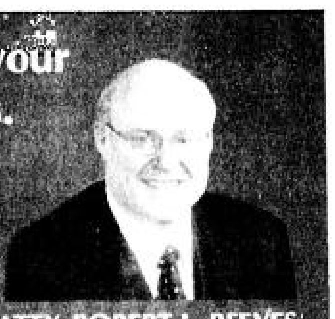

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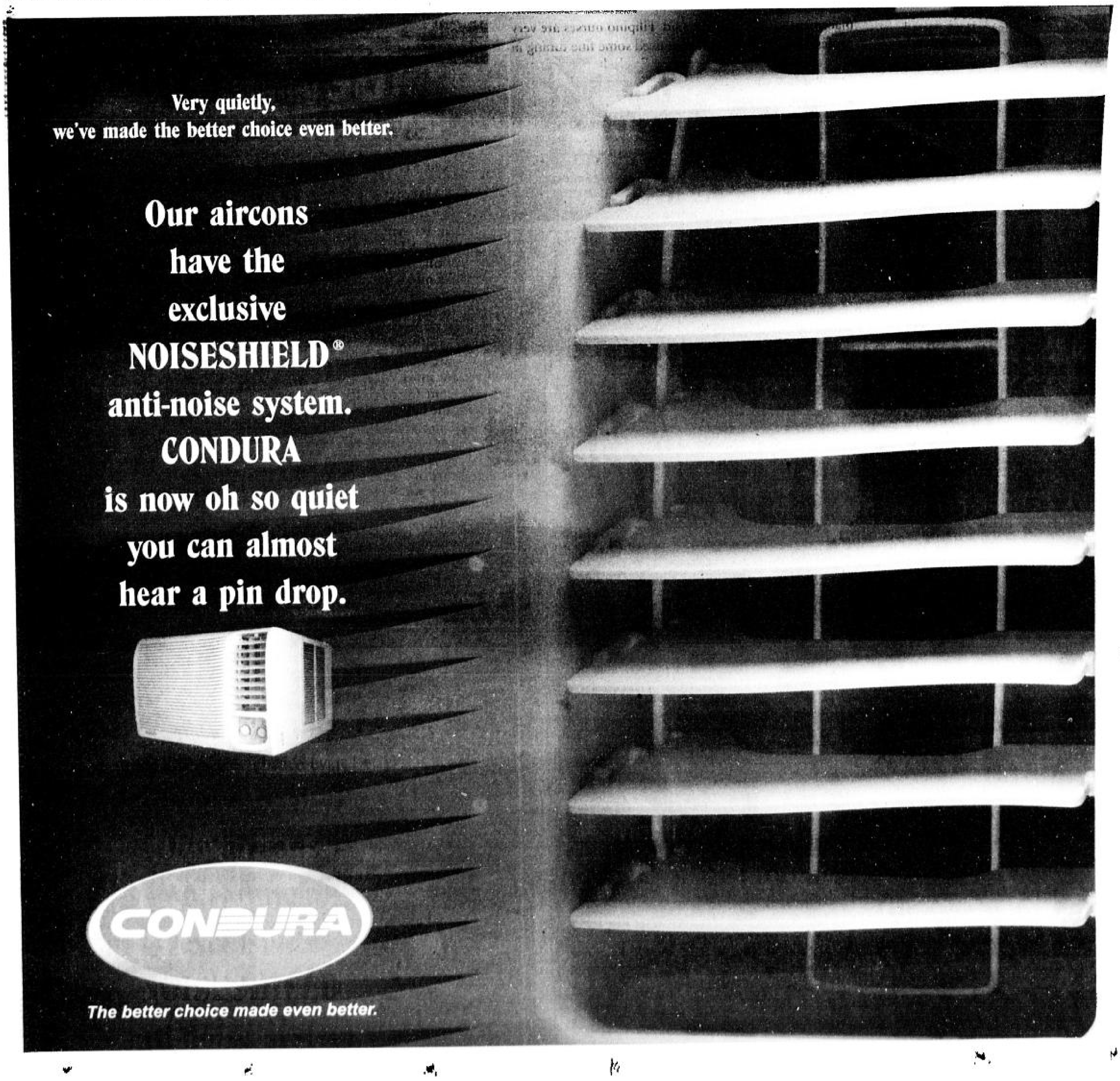

Abcede: Deal with Imelda like 'rediscounting'

By Alcuin Papa

AN OFFICIAL OF THE PRESIDENTIAL COMmission on Good Government yesterday likened a settlement with Imelda Marcos and her family regarding their alleged ill-gotten wealth to a "check rediscounting" scheme.

Speaking at a Rotary Club function in Makati City, PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede said it was important to find a way to raise funds for the national treasury now, rather than later.

"Settlements smack of check rediscounting. Because of the unbearable red tape inherent in due process, we want to convert into cash now the postdated checks that future legal victories entitle us to. Our sense of right and wrong tells us that it is right to come to the rescue of our citizens now," Abcede told his audience.

He said it was not a matter of whether or not the government could win its cases against the Marcoses, but "how much longer [before] those much awaited legal victories will be attained—and thereafter, how much longer [before] those paper victories will translate into funds for the government."

"The PCGG is open to compromise agreements because, after 20 long years of costly litigation, it now wants to sue for peace so that under a more amicable cloud the parties to the settlement may each begin to benefit from their fair share of the contested resources.

"In other words, as the PCGG commissioner in charge of asset management, I would like ceded funds to reach government coffers the soonest, because schoolchildren have to go to school now, eat now, obtain medical help now—not tens of years later," Abcede said.

He answered the criticism of his pursuit of a compromise with Marcoses by saying it was better to settle with the family than be angry at them.

"It's just mind-boggling how even the otherwise more astute members of our society can be so blinded by emotions that they won't see what even a humble balut vendor will readily apprehend, which is that reconciliation is patently and infinitely better than raging animosity," he said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, June 14, 2006
10th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 1 K 18:20-39
Gospel: Matthew 5:17-19

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not think that I have come to remove the Law and the Prophets. I have not come to remove but to fulfill them. I tell you this: as long as heaven and earth last, not the smallest letter or stroke of the Law will change until all is fulfilled.

So then, whoever breaks the least important of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be the least in the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, whoever obeys them and teaches others to do the same will be great in the kingdom of heaven."

Commentary

Elijah returns and conquers the prophets of Baal, and the people return to God when they see the power of Yahweh consuming everything. The prayer of Elijah is heard on behalf of the people so that they will know who is God in Israel and be converted. Jesus speaks and lives in this tradition of the prophets: speaking the truth, teaching the law, deepening it and extending its practice to all the world. The fullness of the law is Jesus' life, words, practice, and presence for all the world. We are followers of a liberator, a lawgiver, a prophet, and the Truth incarnate.

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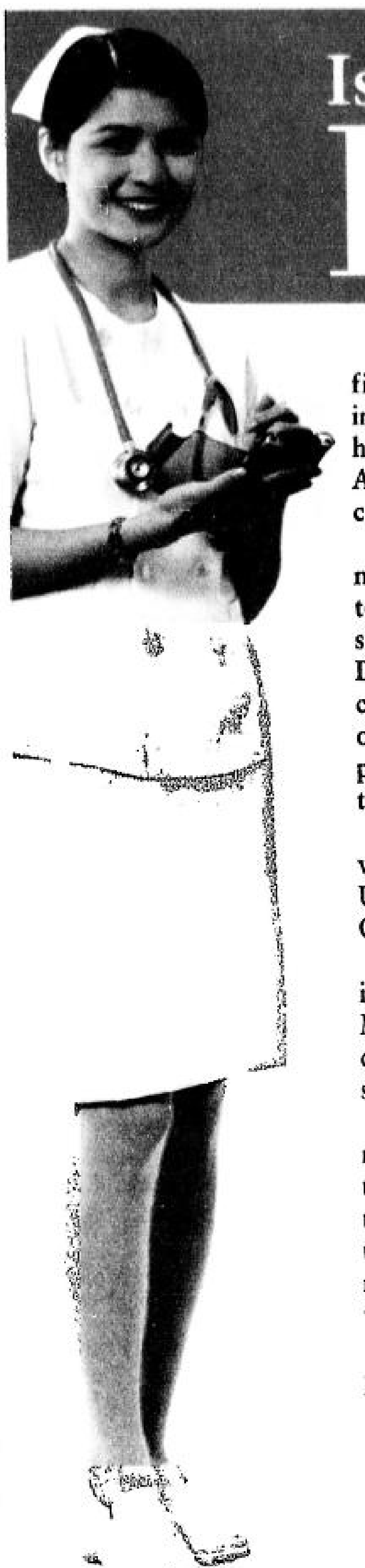


Is your nursing school geared up for the DIGITAL AGE?

The healthcare industry has finally realized the value of investing in technology. Hospitals have learned to embrace the Digital Age for more efficiency and better care for its patients.

In the United States, for instance, nurses use wireless mobile laptops to record patients' vital signs, symptoms, and medications. Doctors can sign into the same central system from laptops too, or from any desktop PC, to order prescriptions and lab tests and read their patient's progress.

Ace Kismundo, a registered nurse working at the Medical/Surgical Unit of the University of California, Davis Medical Center (UCDMC) shares that hospitals in the US now use the Electronic Medical Record(EMR) for documentation and information sharing.

Kismundo said the EMR has made information easily accessible to healthcare providers especially to doctors who are most of the time in remote areas but need to regularly check on the status of their patients.

"Since all documentations pertaining to direct patient care are in the EMR, care providers may see patients' records even from remote locations. Patients' tests, procedures, lab results, etc. are gathered in the EMR," Kismundo said.

"In today's technology, we are moving away from paper-based documentations. All are in the computer, thus a nurse should be equipped with the knowledge on how to use one," Kismundo added.

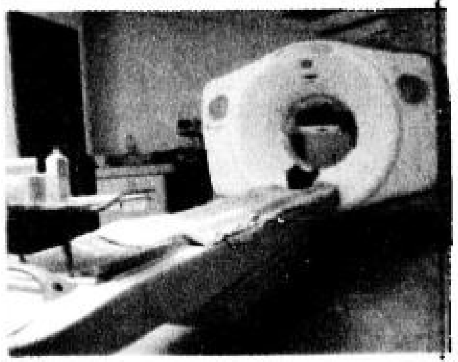
The use of new technology however poses a challenge for hospital workers, especially for nurses. This should be a concern for Filipino nurses who are of great demand in the US and elsewhere.

According to the Philippine Overseas and Employment Agency (POEA), Filipino nurses working overseas are now in the vicinity of 90,000 and a million more will be needed in the coming years as demand is still high in countries such as the U.S., Canada, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

The huge number of Filipino nurses leaving for work abroad is causing the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) some worries. The Philippines may now be exporting more qualified nurses faster than we are producing them.

Sharing CHED's concern, STI has made a commitment to help the government in improving nursing education in the country. By intensifying IT education in its nursing curriculum, STI said its students are made to be more competitive in the modern environment here and abroad.

STI invested over P100 million to put up state-of-the-art nursing skills laboratories that simulate actual hospital setting.



DLS-STI Medical Center is one of the only 2 hospitals in the country that has the 64-Slice CT Scan.

The Open-type MRI is one of the latest equipment being used at DLS-STI Medical Center.

Keeping updated with the latest technology

Dr. Gina S. Brown, Ph.D., a registered nurse and Chief Operating Officer of GROW Healthcare LLC, STI's placement agency partner, said Filipino nurses are very professional in their work but need some fine tuning in the area of IT and even in English proficiency.

Brown said that Filipino healthcare professionals still need to improve their English proficiency, IT, and clinical skills. She added - nurses who want to work in the US need to be kept updated of the latest technological tools being used today.

Brown however lauded Filipino nurses for their professionalism and said that in her more than 10 years experience working as a nurse in various states in the US, she has never met any other culture who has exhibited such fine display of excellence in terms of work ethic.

STI has integrated ICT education in its Nursing programs to make nursing professionals even more competitive in the modern healthcare environment

Delos Santos Medical Center was recently renamed as DLS-STI Medical Center with STI's acquisition of a significant stake in the hospital.

ICT-Enhanced Education

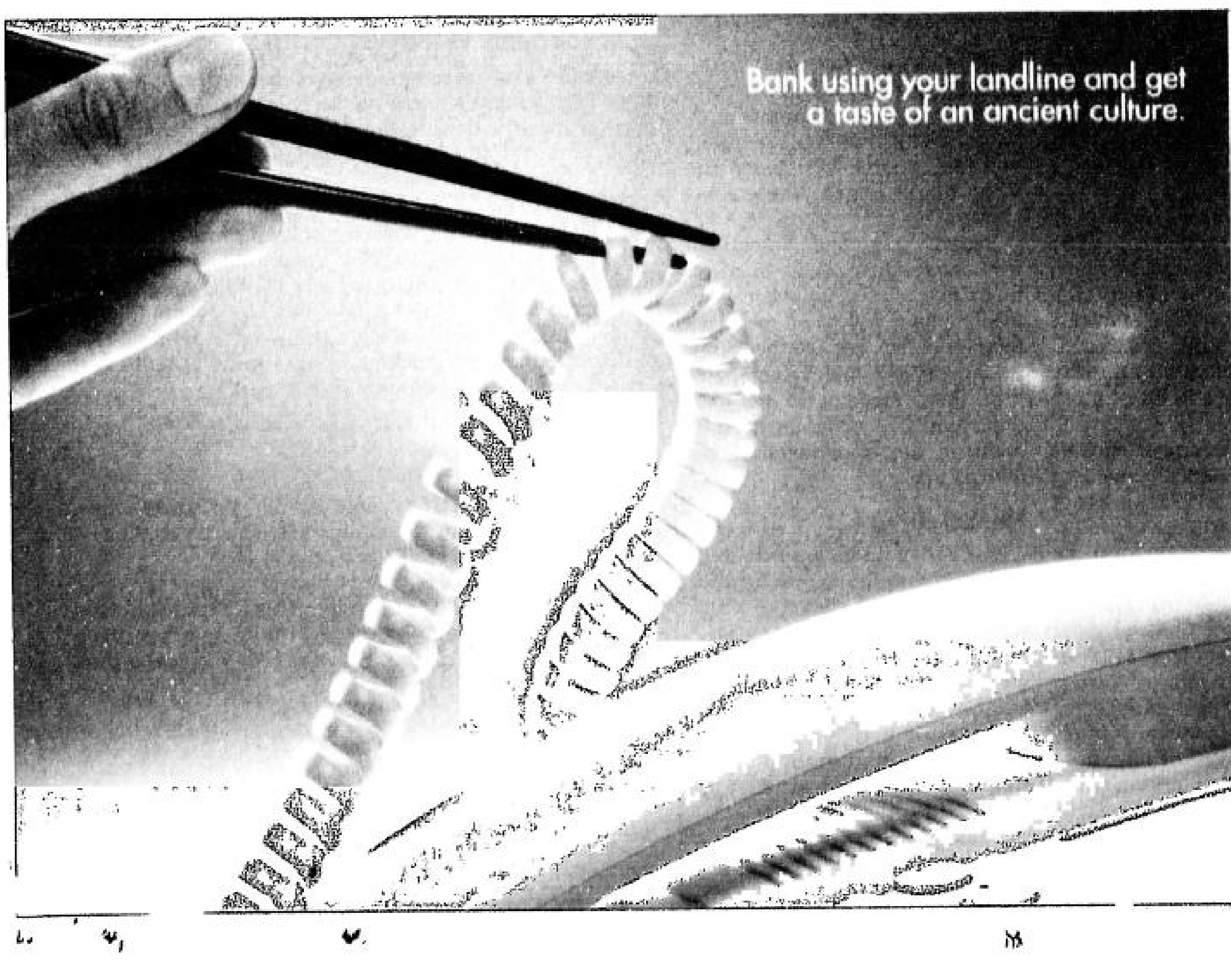
Using its strength in computer education, STI has integrated ICT education in its Nursing programs to make nursing professionals even more competitive in the modern environment, particularly in healthcare institutions abroad.

"It's not enough that a nursing graduate knows the theories. To become more effective, it is also important for nurses to be able to know the latest technological tools now being used in hospitals, " STI President and CEO Monico V. Jacob said.

According to Jacob, patients nowadays will no longer see nurses in the US jotting down patient information using metal patient charts. "To make the documentation process faster and more efficient, what they use now are handheld PCs," he said.

To make sure that its nursing students are abreast with the latest technological developments, Jacob said STI has put up state-of-the-art nursing skills laboratories which are designed to simulate the actual hospital setting.

In addition, STI recently acquired a significant stake in DLS-STI Medical Center to further improve healthcare services and education in the country, especially in the area of healthcare informatics, to better prepare nurses for the Digital Age.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4th explosion rocks Metro

From page A1

Detection Management, to supervise the investigation.

'Taong Bayan at Kawal'

The little-known group called "Taong Bayan at Kawal" claimed responsibility for the explosion. It had earlier claimed the same for the three earlier explosions at the Grepalife building in Makati City and at police outposts in Quezon City.

But PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao Jr., who came to the site of yesterday's blast, said police had yet to find concrete evidence to back the group's claim.

"We can establish that through [an examination of] the explosive device and [its components] whether they were the same kind or not," Pagdilao told the INQUIRER.

He said scene of the crime operatives had recovered pieces of the explosive device for examination.

But NCRPO Director Vidal Querol told reporters that the explosions had not had a broad effect on the country.

"They just generated a little noise, but no threats to security in Metro Manila," he said.

'Sound effects'

Malacañang refused to speculate on who could be responsible for what Michael Defensor, President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff, described as mostly "sound effects" meant only to instill fear among civilians or embarrass the PNP.

"As far as we are concerned, the investigating agencies have yet to come up with solid proof as to the perpetrators of these various incidents. In the meantime, we don't want to engage in speculation as to the possible groups behind these incidents," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye told reporters at a briefing.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales had claimed that the opposition was behind the explosions, but Bunye said the Palace had decided to leave the matter entirely to the PNP.

Defensor said Taong Bayan at Kawal was "probably made up of the same personalities that have wanted to overthrow the President, but under a different name."

He said Malacañang was not worried about the bombings just yet, and was quick to rule out the involvement of the "legitimate opposition."

But judging from intelligence reports, destabilizers had become "desperate," Defensor said.

"Whether it is assassination or bombing, pillbox or just for sound effects, they only want to show an image of destabilization in the country," he said.

Defensor also expressed agreement with the assessment of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita that the bombings were no different from the acts of terrorists.

But a ranking intelligence officer said it was clear that extremist groups such as the regional Jemaah Islamiyah and its local ally, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), were not involved.

"It cannot be the JI, ASG or MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front). We don't see their [mark]," said the officer who asked not to be named for lack of authority to make statements on the issue.

'Unserviceable' vehicle

Villanueva said he was asleep in his office inside Camp Bagong Diwa when he heard the blast at around 4:40 a.m.

He said he could not explain why the bombers would use an "unserviceable" vehicle as "a target [of] evil doings."

"Maybe they just want to discredit the police organization," he said.

Villanueva said the perpetrators could be anyone because informal settlers had occupied the borders of the camp, which also houses various offices, including the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

He also said strict measures were in place to regulate entry, but "we cannot prevent civilians from entering the camp."

Pagdilao said the series of explosions were apparently designed not to cause harm to the public because all were carried out in the wee hours of the morning.

"[The bombers] would want to sow fear, but for what purpose?" he said.

He added that the PNP would find out whether the group that claimed responsibility for the bombings was a new organization or "an existing group working under the guise of a new [name]."

'Unprecedented'

"Historically," said Razon, "this is the first time we have heard of this group (Taong Bayan at Kawal)."

Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez called on PNP officials to make "a categorical statement" on the bombings, including "who they believe are responsible," and to "explain why even highly secured government facilities have been penetrated."

"What are the police and military intelligence doing?" the former national security adviser said.

"If they fail to make that categorical statement, they could be accused of being clueless, or ugly speculations ... could worsen—that the government is behind the bombings," Golez said.

He also said the series of bombings was "unprecedented in recent memory."

According to Razon, all government intelligence units have been instructed to dig up information on Taong Bayan at Kawal.

But while the authorities were tight-lipped on the possible perpetrators, Carl Ala, information officer of the militant farmers group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, theorized that disgruntled soldiers and policemen might be behind the attacks.

"It's a political move, a way of showing their discontent. They make it a point not to harm anyone, but the targets are the police or military," Ala said.

He added that the bombings could be an indication of "the intensity of the rift" in the armed services.

But Razon said that if people with military training had carried out the attacks, their targets would have been destroyed.

In the first three explosions, a low-explosive black powder, an ingredient found in firecrackers, was used.

Tightened security

Lomibao yesterday ordered regional commanders to tighten security in police camps nationwide.

He also asked citizens transacting business with the police to "bear with the temporary inconvenience and to extend utmost cooperation with camp authorities."

"Keep calm, be objective and be constantly informed of public interest matters, especially those concerning public safety and security," Lomibao urged the public.

Pagdilao said the security measures instituted in police camps were like those in place in big hotels—"bags will be checked, as well as vehicles coming inside."

The Aviation Security Group (ASG) also announced that airport security had been beefed up.

Chief Supt. Andres Caro, ASG director, told reporters at a forum in Camp Crame that additional monitoring teams had been deployed, perimeter checkpoints set up and guards in critical control areas doubled.

THE LATEST EXPLOSION happens right inside Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan and creates a small crater near this van's right rear wheel but causes no injuries. REM ZAMORA

Visibility patrols

More visibility patrols and random sweeps have also been put in place, Caro said.

The ASG secures some 60 domestic and international airports all over the country.

"We should be able to control, perfectly if possible, the movement of people—whether authorized personnel or passengers—and objects, where possible threats will be coming from," Caro said.

According to Caro, airports are a primary target of terrorists and destabilizers because of the potential impact of an attack on the international community.

He said that, for example, the Ninoy Aquino International Airport ranked No. 4 in the hierarchy of targets during the purported coup attempt in February. (The other targets were Malacañang, Camp Crame and Camp Aguinaldo.) *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Philip C. Tubeza*

Aeta: From 'lubay' to Levi's, from mountain to the lowland

From page A1

Badar of Zambales, Miranda King of Pampanga and Lunas Tolentino of Tarlac. Badar placed her age at 102, King at 86 and Tolentino at 70.

From G-strings to denims

To King's grandson, Joseph, 21, the problem could be seen in the way Aeta men are garbed.

"We stopped wearing the *lubay* or *pinang* (G-string). It's Levi's or other denim pants. We got a lot of those used clothing when we were in evacuation centers," Joseph, an agroforestry graduate, said while waiting for passengers for his tricycle at the Villa Maria resettlement in Porac, Pampanga.

"The *lubay* is only worn now on special occasions. I feel primitive wearing it," he said.

Badar, interviewed in her house at the Loob Bunga resettlement in Botolan, said: "The Aeta culture is dying. I'm frightened by this."

"It's rare that the *pag-anito* (curing ritual), *atang* (food offering to the mountain god Apo Namalyari) and *duroro* (prayerful singing to the gods) are done now," said Badar.

Her tribe in Poon Bato was drawn to Catholicism and the image of the Virgin Mary (Apo Apang) was much revered there. But Badar said her tribe held onto the practices and never lost faith in Apo Namalyari.

Badar, a daughter of Sinfrocio Dumulot, a sacristan to a Spanish friar, said she still faced the direction of the volcano, the abode of Apo Namalyari, whenever she prayed.

Pinatubo is 40 km from where she has lived in the last 14 years.

Disregard for elders

Disrespect and disregard for the elders were also prevalent, she said. In her case, she was sought out only when job seekers among Aeta needed certifications of their membership in the tribe.

Leadership was now determined not by wisdom, but by the material support that younger leaders brought to the community.

But that, Badar said, would depend on the patronage of politicians in the lowlands, impairing the self-reliance Aeta are known to exercise.

There are also more incidents of gambling, alcoholism and womanizing, Badar said.

Begging in cities

King lamented that younger Aeta do not relate to Apo Namalyari with the same deep faith and trust that their elders did. Others, he said, had stopped believing in the deity.

Tolentino said the concept of *kanawan* (freedom from hardship) had changed. Instead of obtaining *kanawan* from toiling on the land or in the forests, Aeta of working age got that by selling their labor for wages. Some would beg in urban centers.

More men resort to elopement than betrothal and the *bandi* (property) system in taking a woman in marriage, Tolentino said.

Elders see various reasons for these.

Dual communities

The eruptions had forced them to leave the mountain, break partial or total isolation and be more exposed to the ways of the lowlanders. The eruptions also damaged their natural environment, where the practices and values had been rooted. Because that same altered landscape was hostile to agriculture, the Aeta had to find other means to live.

Then, too, the construction of roads leading to the upland resettlements, where the displaced population had been concentrated, saw the entry of more religious missions there.

Most Aeta maintained dual communities. They retained their homes in resettlements so their children could attend schools there and be close to sources of free social services.

On the other hand, they carried out their economic activities during dry months in their original villages.

This situation and the distance of the farms from each other did not help in strengthening ties among the villagers, with their natural environment.

Semi-isolation

Such was the case of Andres Cabalic. In Zambales, his house was in Bihawo and his farm was in Bel-bel, villages that were six hours apart travelling on foot. His relatives on the Pampanga and Tarlac side of the volcano had the same situation.

In pre-eruption years, Cabalic said he seldom left the abode, coming down only when he had to buy farming tools. "Everything you needed was on the mountain," he said.

The NCIP said 70 percent of Aeta in 114 settlements in 1985 lived in semi-isolation. Their exposure to lowlanders was confined to *sakadora* (financiers and buyers of crops) and to market-goers to whom they directly sold their crops and forest products.

In the 10 upland resettlements that the government built for 5,133 families in 1991, it was not known exactly how many had actually left for good or lived the way Cabalic did.

Among the villages that had been rebuilt on their original sites or near them were Villar in Zambales; Tarukan in Capas, Tarlac; Tolentino's village of Sto. Niño in Bamban, Tarlac; Kamias in Porac, Pampanga; Batyawan in Floridablanca, Pampanga; Marcos, Macapagal and Manicayo in Mabalacat, Pampanga, and Sapang Bato in Angeles City.

Members of King's clan visited Inararo, 6 km east of the volcano. They planted banana and yam on lands cleared of thick volcanic debris, returning to Villa Maria when the rains started.

Badar, King and Tolentino would want their people to keep their culture not only because this had been passed on to them by their elders, but also because these practices and values had kept them together in normal times and had maintained harmony in the communities and with nature.

Herbal cures

The curing ritual, for instance, was central to the Aeta religious life and the most elaborate with which they related with Apo Namalyari and spirits, anthropologist Hiromu Shimizu said in 1989.

It was said that this ritual erased the inhibition of the sick and those concerned for him or her because they and the healer, when in a state possessed by the good or bad spirit, were free to interact and to express their emotions.

When nature finally heals the environs of Pinatubo, Aeta midwife Jena de la Cruz said it would be best to resume the use of *lunas bundok* (herbal remedies).

The availability of free medicines and hospitalization took the Aeta away from indigenous cures, reducing knowledge and appreciation of local health methods and the mountain's resources for healing.

Land and identity

Land, King said, was also important in preserving the identity of the Aeta.

"You won't know your *pinibatan* (origin) if you can't even have a land to call your own. That's Pinatubo," he said.

This was why King and Tolentino led their people back to Pinatubo in 1994 after almost three years of staying in Barangay Pinaltakan in Palayan City in Nueva Ecija.

"We told the local officials there: 'While we appreciate your hosting us, we haven't been at peace here. We miss our place. We also don't want to be taking lands that are not ours,'" Tolentino said.

This was also why Tolentino's tribe fought efforts by the Clark Development Corp. to reduce the 10,000 hectares covered by a certificate of ancestral domain claim (CADC).

Paradox

King had been working to get a CADC for the Aeta in Inararo.

"When lowlanders come to buy lands in the mountains and the powerful ones threaten me, I tell them, 'Show me someone who can make mountains. When you can't, leave now,'" he said.

Land speculations intensified in Porac when portions of it were bought for the right of way of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway, he said.

The CADCs had been slow in coming even as the Aeta suffered the cruel paradox of history in the 20th century. They lost much of the domain when the Americans declared these military reservations for Clark and Subic.

The NCIP had awarded the CADCs for 52,371 hectares on the lower slopes but not all of these would be in the complete control of the Aeta.

"Unless we have proof to show we own the land, we won't be secure from the loggers, miners and buyers of real estate. I don't want my people to be a landless tribe," King said.

Plant or clean

Badar had her own way of establishing rights to a niche in the habitat.

"Wherever I go, I always plant trees so that my grandchildren won't ever have to even look up at the trees of others," she said.

Those without land or seeds to plant could land jobs as janitors or carpenters in Clark.

The elders said the best thing that emerged from the disaster was that young Aeta were given access to basic education.

Dr. Rufino Tima, an anthropologist who worked with the Aeta for 33 years, said the government should consider a rehabilitation program that would focus on reviving the old villages to help Aeta secure their culture there.

In The Know

Pinatubo's eruptions

MOUNT Pinatubo straddles the Zambales mountain ranges and is part of the Luzon volcanic arc. Before its eruption in 1991, its summit was 1,745 meters high.

The volcano's unrest was initially felt with earthquakes on March 15, 1991. Small explosions occurred on April 2, followed by more ash emissions. The first major eruption was recorded on June 12 at 8:51 a.m, with ash and steam clouds rising 19 km high.

Climactic eruptions began on June 15 at 1:42 p.m., lasting for nine hours. Clouds of fine ash and steam expanded to 400 km in diameter. To make matters worse, Typhoon "Diding" (international code-name: Yunya) turned into a tropical storm, its winds spreading fine ash to as far as Indochina, which is more than 1,200 km away from Mt. Pinatubo.

The rains triggered the first wave of lahar. The June 15 eruptions left 5.5 cu km of deposits along the slopes and injected 17 million tons of sulfur into the atmosphere, warming the earth for years.

The disaster affected 2.1 million Filipinos, displacing 1.3 million of that number. At least 113,921 refugees were housed in evacuation camps; 22 percent were Aeta.

A total of P4.2 billion was spent in 1991-92 to dredge rivers and to construct dikes and dams to control lahar.

Lahar buried 18,000 hectares of forest land which was already covered with 25 cm of ash. Towns hardest hit by lahar were Botolan and San Marcelino in Zambales, Porac and Floridablanca in Pampanga and Bamban and Capas in Tarlac.

About 2,000 people died at the height of the disaster and during lahar flows from 1991 to 1997.

The Mt. Pinatubo Commission built 23 resettlements on 6,228 hectares of land for 46,485 families. *Sources: Edward W. Wolfe and Richard P. Hoblitt/US Geological Survey, DOH, Neda, Mt. Pinatubo Commission, Joint Congressional Oversignt Committee, June 11, 1999 hearing*

Corrections

IN THE JUNE 10 ISSUE, a photo caption on Page A16 misstated the name of a National Artist awardee. The correct name of the awardee is Abdulmari Asia Imao—not Imago.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 12 ISSUE, a Lifestyle article on Page E3—"Spoliarium: A Filipino tragedy"—misstated the composer of the opera "Carmen." The opera was composed by Georges Bizet—not Charles Gounod.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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Gov't allows Lafayette to open for 30-day test

From page A1

safe and beneficial to the community.

"They can consider this 30-day period an acid test. No pun intended," Reyes said, adding that the test run would be evaluated by government and third-party experts.

The government said allowing Lafayette to resume operations would result in 900 jobs, P3 billion in government revenues, and P5 million a year in project commitments.

Rapu-Rapu is expected to produce copper, gold, silver and zinc valued at $350 million over six years.

The company welcomed the department's decision, saying it would comply with the conditions immediately and could be ready for the test run by July.

"We are very confident that the remedial measures we have undertaken will allow us to comply with the requirements of the DENR and hurdle the 30-day test run," said Carlos G. Dominguez, Lafayette chief executive officer and president.

Dominguez said his company was still clarifying the guidelines and the conditions set by the DENR for the test run.

Conditions accepted

"We are accepting the conditions being imposed on the company and as soon as we clarify certain points, we would want to start with the test run. After we passed it, our next step would be to seek permission from the DENR to allow us to go full steam with production," he said.

Environmental groups had called for a closure of the mine and a repeal of a 1995 law opening the mining industry to foreign firms. The incident has become a test case of President Macapagal-Arroyo's commitment to mining investments, as well as enforcement of environmental safeguards.

The cash-strapped government had opened the mining industry to foreigners in hopes of generating $5 billion to $7 billion in foreign exchange annually and creating 240,000 jobs over the next six years.

The head of the defunct Rapu-Rapu Fact-Finding Commission that conducted a probe of the effects of mining on Rapu-Rapu Island expressed great disappointment at the DENR decision.

Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes said the decision ignored the findings of scientists and the clamor of the people for the closure of the mine.

"We are only recommending. Sadly, they didn't follow our recommendations. We'll wait what will happen," the prelate said.

Charles Avila, former vice chair of the fact-finding committee, said the government missed the opportunity to give a strong warning to the mining industry about its seriousness to impose harsh penalties on erring mining companies.

While it recommended for the cancellation of Lafayette's environmental compliance certificate (ECC), the committee suggested that the company be allowed to reapply.

With the cancellation of the ECC, the government would be sending a message that it would not think twice about imposing harsh penalties on firms found violating Philippine laws. But the government would still allow mining firms to apply for a new permit based on the rules set by government agencies, Avila said.

Three-stage test run

In a 70-page report prepared over three weeks, experts from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau detailed a three-stage test run for Lafayette.

The first stage, spanning five days, involves the running of clean water into the pipe network to check for leaks and the efficiency of the pumps, detoxification circuit and events pond.

The second stage, spanning nine days, involves mixing of non-ore rocks with wastewater and circulating this to test the electro-mechanical system.

The last stage, spanning 15 days, involves actual production of up to 30 percent capacity to simulate normal operations to determine the efficiency of the whole system.

"Before, during and after the test run, certain conditions would have to be met. After the company complies with all these conditions, a final lifting order shall be issued to Lafayette for it to resume full operations," Reyes said.

"If they don't pass it (test run), we close it (mining project)," he said.

Unfavorable to RP

The DENR's five findings echoed much of the report of the Malacañang-created Rapu-Rapu Fact-Finding Commission.

Reyes acknowledged that the 23-77 percent sharing of benefits from the mineral utilization of Rapu-Rapu Island had "clearly been grossly unfavorable to the Philippine government."

If the island had not been declared a special economic zone, which entails tax incentives, the sharing would have been 54-46 in favor of the government. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Norman Bordadora in Manila*

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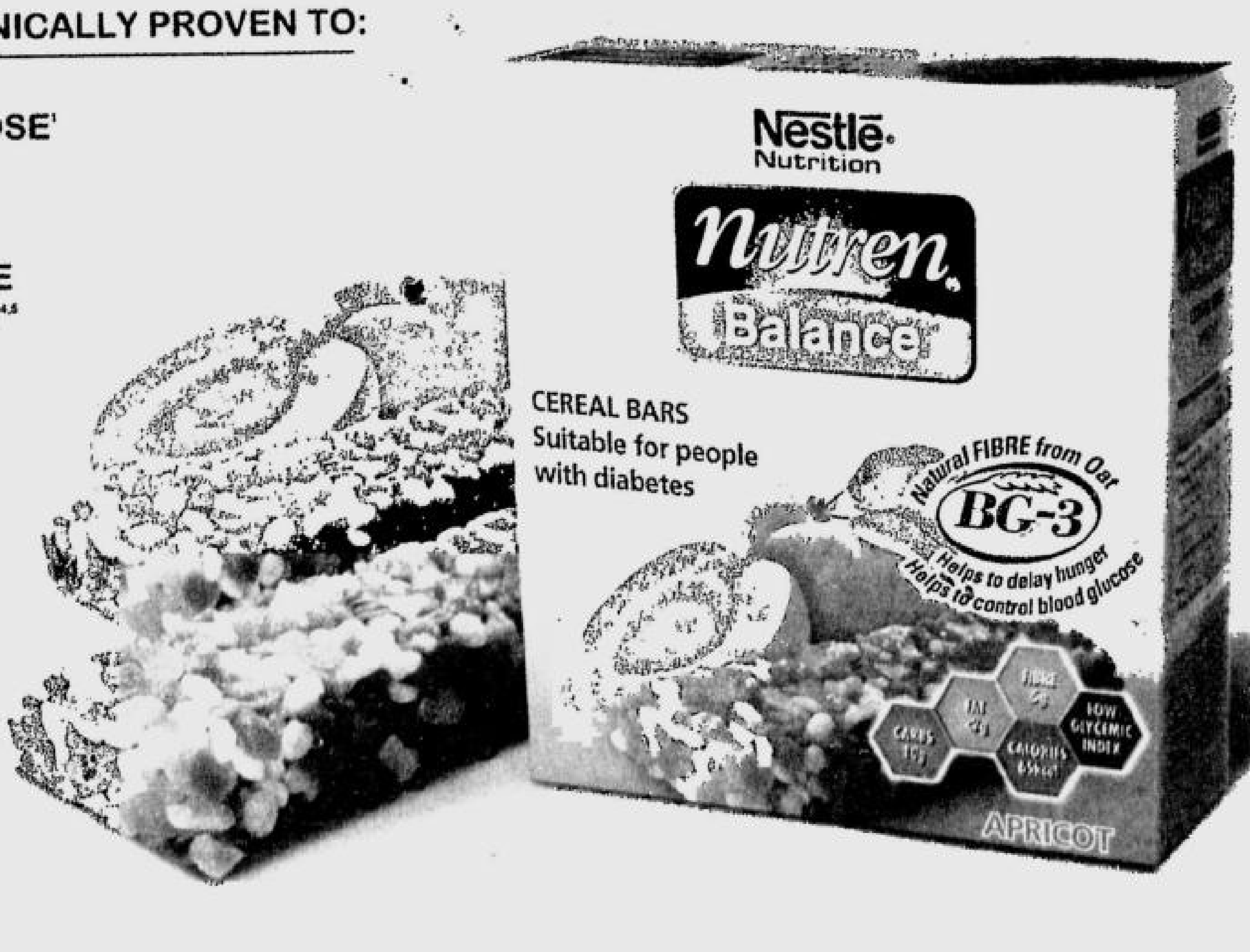

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Zamboanga Norte RP's poorest

From page A1

cial Sectors B Division, the NSCB group that conducted the study.

Zamboanga del Norte, the country's poorest province, recorded the largest increase in poverty incidence—from 47 percent of the families in 2000 to 64.6 percent (about 573,506 people) in 2003.

Rizal had the lowest poverty incidence at 3.4 percent.

Nationwide, the poverty incidence among families stood at 24.4 percent, or 23.8 million people, an improvement from 2000 when 28 percent of families could not make ends meet.

This translated to a decrease of 124,000 in the number of poor Filipino families over the three-year period.

In terms of population, 30 of every 100 Filipinos in 2003 lived in poverty, an improvement from 2000 when 33 of every 100 Filipinos did not earn enough to provide for their basic needs.

This meant a decrease of 1.6 million in the number of Filipinos living in poverty.

Besides Zamboanga del Norte, areas in Mindanao on the list of the 10 poorest provinces were Maguindanao, Surigao del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Sur, Misamis Occidental and Lanao del Norte.

Masbate's distinction

Two Luzon provinces (Mountain Province and Masbate) and one Visayan province (Biliran) also made it to the list.

Metro Manila (divided into four districts by the NSCB), Batanes, Laguna, Bulacan, Cavite and Nueva Vizcaya joined Rizal in the roster of the 10 "least poor" areas in Luzon.

"These provinces are situated near Metro Manila. The resources must have spilled over," said Ignacio, referring to Rizal, Laguna, Bulacan and Cavite.

From the 2000 list of poorest provinces, seven managed to get out in 2003. These were Sulu, Ifugao, Lanao del Sur, Camiguin, Camarines Norte, Tawi-Tawi and Romblon.

Masbate, Maguindanao, and Agusan del Sur were on the 2000 and 2003 lists. Masbate has the distinction of being the only province on the list since 1997, according to the NSCB study.

Trickle down effect

Government efforts to uplift the lives of the people, particularly in the countryside, may be starting to pay off but there is still much to be done, according to two government officials in Mindanao.

"The policy of the President (Macapagal-Arroyo) is having a trickle-down effect on areas considered to be suffering from poverty," Ms Arroyo's peace adviser Jesus Dureza told the INQUIRER last week.

Dureza said the NSCB report about the exit of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Camiguin and Lanao del Sur from the list of poorest provinces showed that government efforts had improved the lives of the people there.

"But it is not enough and we have to work some more," he said.

Virgilio Leyretana, chair of the Mindanao Economic Development Council, said various foreign aid programs had helped boost government efforts to provide livelihood to the poor.

Improving security

Leyretana also credited the improving peace and order for the bright economic situation in the provinces.

"Peace has contributed to the socioeconomic development in the areas," he said.

Dureza said the role of the people in achieving peace should not be ignored.

Residents of areas that managed to escape from poverty became "proactive" in the development of their community, he said.

"Hopefully, this should be a start of a breakthrough," Dureza said.

He said the signing of a final peace deal between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front could further improve the lives of people in Mindanao's poorest provinces.

POVERTY INCIDENCE

Province	Poverty incidence among families (in %)	Annual per capita poverty threshold (in Pesos)	Number of poor families
Zamboanga Norte	64.6	10,871	110,831
Maguindanao	60.4	12,322	93,501
Masbate	55.9	12,504	81,804
Surigao Norte	54.5	12,998	52,417
Agusan del Sur	52.8	12,150	59,815
Surigao Del Sur	48.6	11,227	47,192
Misamis Occ.	48.1	11,711	50,189
Mt. Province	46.7	14,855	13,740
Biliran	46.5	11,144	13,709
Lanao del Norte	46.5	12,103	73,114
Camarines Norte	46.1	12,727	44,874
Kalinga	46.1	13,284	15,151
Sulu	45.1	13,473	48,195
Saranggani	44.4	10,846	41,346
Antique	43.4	11,377	42,389
Palawan	43.1	11,591	73,049
Sultan Kudarat	41.5	10,870	52,064
Cotabato City	41.2	13,805	14,132
Abra	41	14,654	17,339
Occ. Mindoro	40.9	12,522	34,557
Zamboanga Sibugay	40.7	9,580	40,712
Camarines Sur	40.1	11,873	121,936
Western Samar	38.7	11,675	50,913
Marinduque	38.3	11,781	17,669
Lanao del Sur	37.6	13,702	48,351
Romblon	37.5	11,769	21,116
Davao Oriental	37.2	10,580	33,443
Negros Oriental	37.1	9,017	89,654
Or. Mindoro	37	13,813	53,094
Bukidnon	36.9	11,083	79,985
Leyte	34.6	10,600	117,288
Tawi-tawi	34.6	11,707	20,964
Camiguin	34.5	12,109	5,356
Albay	34.4	12,915	76,200
Compostela Valley	34.4	11,422	44,410
Zamboanga Sur	34.4	10,310	103,323
Eastern Samar	33.9	11,025	25,754
Northern Samar	33.8	9,945	34,696
Sorsogon	33.7	12,452	45,207
Aklan	33.5	11,980	31,068
Basilan	33.5	10,987	17,958
Agusan Norte	33.2	11,460	36,198
Quezon	32.8	13,349	118,941
Guimaras	32.7	11,694	9,525
Southern Leyte	31.9	10,668	24,064
Catanduanes	31.8	11,815	13,604
Negros Occ.	31.4	12,131	164,313
Iloilo	31.1	13,221	121,067
Siquijor	30.9	9,767	5,525
Davao del Norte	30.3	11,833	49,251
Aurora	29.2	12,898	10,951
Bohol	29.2	10,032	65,953
Misamis Or.	28.5	11,594	69,895
Ifugao	28.1	13,148	9,069
South Cotabato	26.4	11,741	66,792
North Cotabato	26.1	10,972	52,759
Pangasinan	25.8	13,412	130,687
Isabela City	24.7	10,429	3,630
La Union	24.6	13,356	33,163
Batangas	24.5	15,957	99,383
Davao del Sur	24.2	11,470	103,963
Quirino	24.1	12,463	7,987
Isabela	23.9	11,808	64,397
Ilocos Sur	22.8	12,824	28,302
Nueva Ecija	22.2	14,394	81,038
Capiz	21.6	11,298	28,711
Ilocos Norte	19.6	12,893	21,694
Cebu	17.1	10,222	125,346
Apayao	16.8	12,256	3,313
Cagayan	16.5	10,320	33,437
Tarlac	14.8	13,866	34,102
Zambales	13.4	12,754	18,674
Benguet	11	14,447	13,472
Pampanga	10.5	15,148	40,661
Bataan	10.2	13,607	12,594
Nueva Vizcaya	9.2	11,880	7,252
Cavite	8.6	16,150	44,707
Bulacan	8.5	15,027	44,800
Laguna	8.4	13,921	39,339
Batanes	6.3	12,279	225
NCR 2nd District	5.8	16,715	29,282
NCR 3rd District	5	16,298	40,811
NCR 4th District	4.5	17,137	27,241
NCR 1st District	3.8	17,223	13,530
Rizal	3.4	13,903	14,542
PHILIPPINES	24.4	12,309	4,022,695

Source: NSCB

No SC rift, says Panganiban

By Armand N. Nocum

CHIEF JUSTICE ARTEMIO PANGANIBAN, whose statement on a "judicial error" in Leo Echegaray's 1999 execution had kicked up a legal storm, yesterday said his views neither created a rift in the Supreme Court nor diminished its capacity to fulfill its role as the final arbiter of legal disputes.

"We discussed it; we have different opinions," Panganiban said in response to a question on whether his statement had offended the other 14 members of the tribunal.

"At the Supreme Court, we respect each other's opinion. I'm a minority there," he said.

The ambush interview took place at the high court, following its signing of a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Foreign Affairs to put the Philippines' 2,000 treaties in electronic form and accessible to the tribunal's electronic library.

Asked to comment on criticism that his views had painted the tribunal as "fickle-minded" and incapable of serving as the court of last resort, Panganiban said: "No ... because that decision stays, and I myself respect that decision."

He refused to comment when asked about a plan by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel to sponsor a bill giving the Echegaray family P10 million in compensation.

"We don't make an opinion on political matters," he said.

Panganiban had earlier said Echegaray should have only been punished with a life sentence because it was not proved that he was the father, stepfather or grandfather of the 10-year-old girl he was convicted of raping.

'Death penalty is OK while . . .

From page A1

Churches (PCEC), a Protestant group closely allied with Ms Arroyo, called a press conference to denounce the scrapping of the death penalty.

"We would like to express our indignation over the haste with which the death penalty was abolished," said Bishop Efraim Tendero, PCEC national director.

"We wonder if the decision was [made] because of political convenience, or that [lawmakers] were really thinking out of their conviction," he said.

VACC official Martin Diño presented the INQUIRER front page dated Jan. 12, 1999, and showing then first lady Loi Ejercito-Estrada and then Vice President Arroyo together at a rally calling for convicted rapist Leo Echegaray's execution.

"If the death penalty is acceptable and popular, [politicians] ride on it. If it's no longer popular, it is abolished," Diño said.

The PCEC, a coalition of around 20,000 evangelical churches nationwide, is a key supporter of Ms Arroyo, especially during the "Hello Garci" scandal that almost toppled her administration.

Asked if the PCEC's contrasting position on the death penalty essentially cut the coalition's ties with the President, Tendero replied: "We support her on other issues, but it doesn't mean that we blindly support her."

Political intervention

At another press conference, lawyer Jose Malvar Villegas, head of the group Citizens' Crime Watch, lauded the few congressmen who voted against the abolition of the death penalty law.

Said lawyer Leonard de Vera, a former president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines: "If the Senate, the House and Malacañang are bombed and you have the highest officials of the land killed, I bet you they will bring back the death penalty law.

"Through the years, we've seen politicians intervening in the implementation of the laws of the land. When you are close to the powers that be, you can push for pardons, commutations ... Justice is sacrificed on the altar of politics."

Lauro Vizconde, another VACC official and an officer of the Crusade Against Violence (CAV), lamented that those who had worked for the institution of the death penalty in the 1990s were not consulted when Congress discussed its abolition.

"We lobbied for eight months. Thus, it hurts us—those who fought for the enactment of the death penalty—that we were not consulted," he said at a news conference.

Vizconde's wife and two daughters were brutally killed in one of a series of such heinous crimes in the early 1990s.

The families of the victims of gruesome murders and brutal rapes came together at that time to form the CAV.

"We just wanted a shoulder to cry on," Vizconde said.

Diño said anticrime groups were calling on Ms Arroyo not to sign the measure abolishing the death penalty.

"Until she signs it into law, there is still hope," he said.

'Duterte formula'

Jimenez said he had consulted Mayor Rodrigo Duterte of Davao City "in search of options other than the decaying justice system."

"The Duterte formula, which has resulted in a peaceful and progressive Davao, will surely work where justice has failed," Jimenez said.

But he clarified that he was not referring to vigilantism or the killing of suspected criminals without due process.

"Duterte should be considered a model local chief executive because of his political will," Jimenez said.

Rizal Javierto, whose 81-year-old mother died in the February stampede at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City, said the abolition of the death penalty would only lead to societal disorder.

"When I was working years ago for an oil refinery in Saudi Arabia, we were afraid to break the law because we knew we could be beheaded for that," Javierto said.

Lorna Ramel, the wife of a policeman who was tortured to death in Parañaque City two years ago, said killers should pay with their lives.

"Those criminals should also go through the pain we have gone through. Only then will we achieve justice," she said.

Short list

In a statement, the PCEC asked that the death penalty be retained for "certain crimes.

It added: "Let the list be short, and limit it to capital crimes, those crimes that cause the loss of other lives.

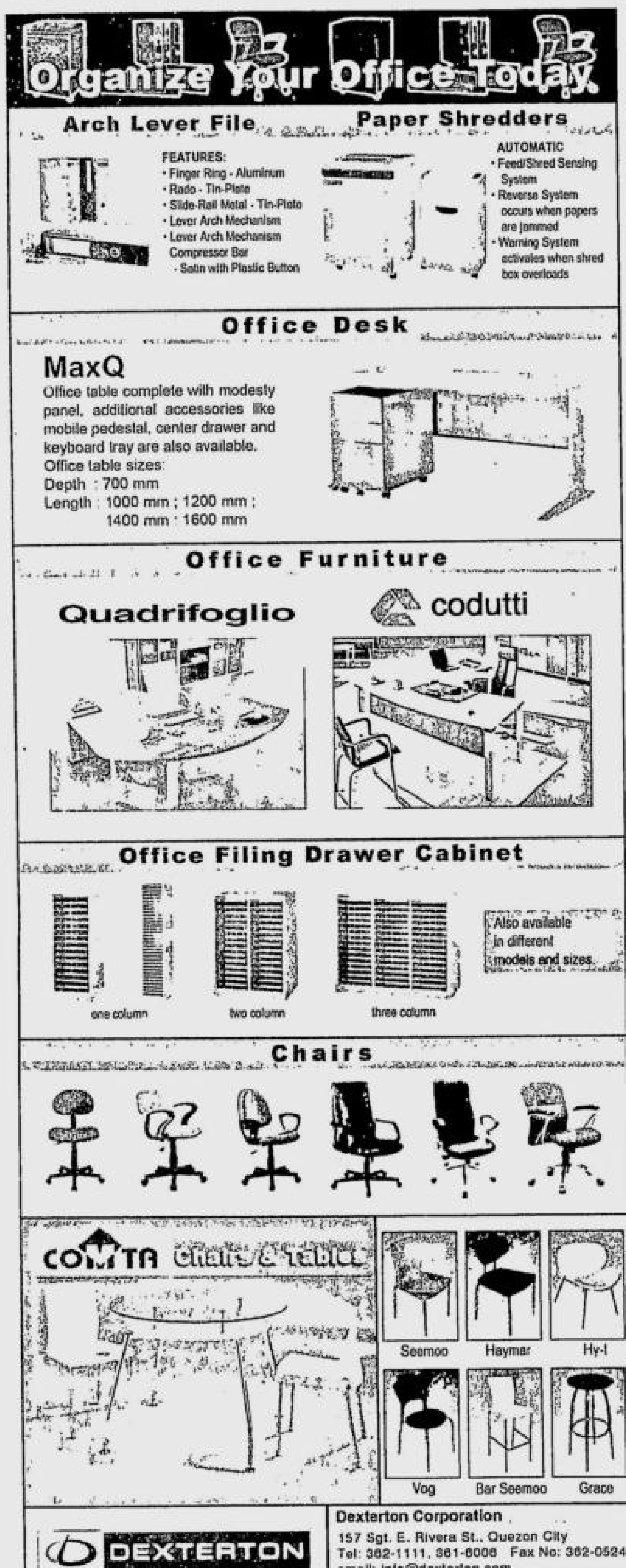
"Let us work hard for improving the system of justice in the land. Let criminals know that crime does not pay. Let the law be applied equally to all, without discrimination."

According to Bish- op Fred Magbanu the PCEC chair repr senting the Christ J sus Our Life grou "conservative" Prote tants who "accept th final authority of th Bible" are unifyi against the aboliti of the death penalty.

Magbanua sa these groups basica ly conformed to th biblical dictum th whoever killed a other person shou pay with his own lif

"Many people s that just because G is love and forgivin He has already fo gotten His law," Ma banua said.

"The manner punishment is not issue of Christian fo giveness," Tende said. *With a report from Norman Bo dadora*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DOH to shut down comm'l blood banks

THE DEPARTMENT of Health will soon be closing down commercial blood banks in line with a Supreme Court order following complaints that they had become sources of contaminated supplies.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III made the announcement during the commemoration of World Blood Donor Day yesterday.

Duque said the closure of the commercial blood banks would not lead to a supply shortage as the health department was anticipating an increase in the volume of blood donations with its new policy of tapping the public school system for voluntary blood donors.

The DOH said the culture of blood donation will soon be taught in public high schools and state universities to "foster a positive attitude" among students.

There are nine commercial blood banks in Metro Manila and at least four in the Visayas, according to Chris Abesamis, head of the DOH's Bureau of Health Services.

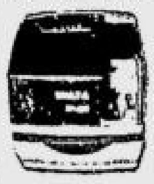
Abesamis said there might be a problem in closing down commercial blood outlets hiding behind "sari-sari" stores or purported diagnostic clinics.

The government plans to increase the number of blood donors from only 500,000 people to 800,000. The DOH said the number was particularly low in April, May, June, November, December and January.

To avoid getting contaminated supplies, the government has centralized blood testing and component processing in strategic areas: The Philippine Children's Medical Center in Quezon City, Bicol Blood Center in Legazpi City, Region VII Blood Center in Cebu for the Visayas, and the Davao Blood Center for Mindanao.

Health officials are discouraging patients needing blood transfusions from getting their supplies through replacement donations, usually involving relatives.

The risk of obtaining unsafe blood is three times greater through replacement donations than through voluntary donors, according to Dr. Elizabeth Nuqui, president of the Philippine Blood Coordinating Council. *Christian V. Esguerra*



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June 24, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
• MARKETING AND SALES MANAGEMENT
July 1, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
B. DIPLOMA PROGRAM IN MARKETING MANAGEMENT
• ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION
June 17, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM -5:00 PM
• BRAND MANAGEMENT
June 24, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
• CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN MARKETING
July 1, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
• MARKETING RESEARCH
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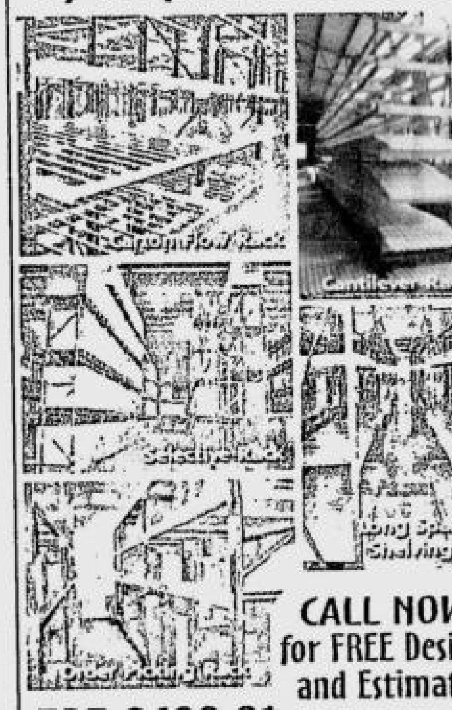

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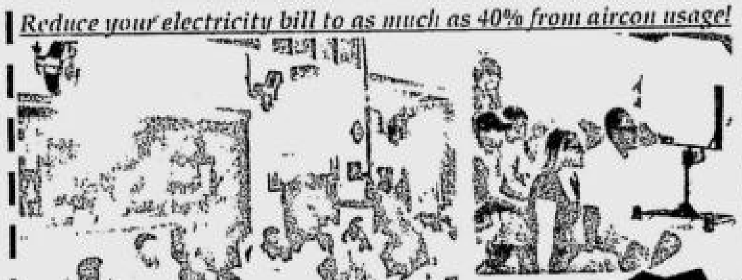
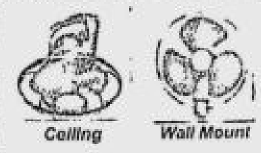

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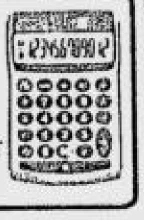

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Bush pays surprise visit to Iraq, meets new PM

From page A1

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The President was expected to be in Baghdad a little more than five hours.

Bush met with al-Maliki in the heavily fortified green zone at a palace once used by deposed President Saddam Hussein but which now serves temporarily as the US Embassy.

"Good to see you," exclaimed al-Maliki, who didn't know Bush was in Baghdad until five minutes before they met.

"Thanks for having me," Bush responded. They smiled broadly and shook hands vigorously in the high-domed marble room.

The trip was known only to a handful of aides and a small number of journalists sworn to secrecy because of obvious security threats for Bush and members of his entourage.

"Obviously, when you're entering a situation where the enemy is so active we have to be extra cautious," White House counselor Dan Bartlett said.

The prime minister had been invited to the embassy on the pretense of taking part in a video conference with Bush, supposedly at Camp David, the presidential retreat north of Washington. The video conference would go on as scheduled, but with Bush to appear alongside al-Maliki.

Bush's secret trip came six days after the death of al-Zarqawi.

The administration hoped the elimination of the al-Qaida leader and the completion of al-Maliki's Cabinet would make war-weary Americans look at Iraq in a more positive light.

Aside from al-Maliki and his Cabinet, Bush was to see Jalal Talibani, Iraq's largely ceremonial president. Bush also was to meet with the speaker of the parliament, national political leaders and US troops.

Air Force One landed in hazy daylight at Baghdad Airport, where the temperature was above 100 degrees (38 Celsius). Bush transferred to a helicopter for the six-minute ride to the green zone.

It was Bush's second trip to Baghdad in less than three years. He met with American troops at Thanksgiving 2003 in a visit confined to the airport and limited to several hours after dark. That trip was kept secret until Bush was safely in the air on the way home.

There are about 132,000 American forces in Iraq, and Bush faces increasing pressure to begin troop withdrawals. Bush says cutbacks depend on Iraq's ability to provide for its own security.

Bartlett said the trip had been in the works for several weeks but was delayed until al-Maliki filled out his Cabinet with his national security team last week.

"We are committed to the success of this new government and the Maliki plan that he is outlining," said Bartlett, who briefed reporters aboard Air Force One.

Al-Maliki has won US admiration by promising to crack down on militias and sectarian violence, promote national reconciliation, accelerate reconstruction efforts and restore essential services such as electricity.

Bush's meeting at Camp David was part of a ruse to conceal his Baghdad trip and a cover story to bring al-Maliki and his Cabinet to the green zone.

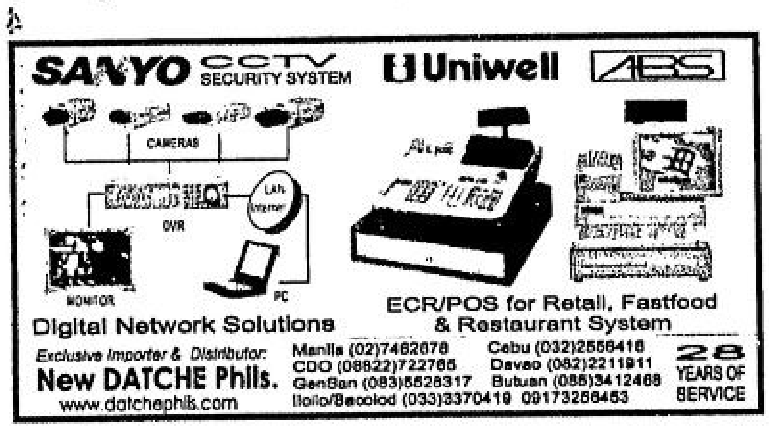
Secrecy aside, the meeting was intended to strengthen ties between the Bush administration and al-Maliki's ministries, Bartlett said.

Most of Bush's aides had expected the President to be at the table with them for the video conference. Instead, they were seeing him from Baghdad. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Vice President Dick Cheney were in on the secret.

Tuesday's trip came as Bush struggled for solid footing for his presidency, rocked by the Iraq war and other problems. About 2,500 members of the military have died since the war began in March 2003.

War anxiety has been the driving force behind Bush's plunge in the polls and a cause of Republican distress about holding control of Congress in the November midterm elections.

Approval of Bush's handling of Iraq has dipped to 33 percent, a new low, and his overall job approval rating was 35 percent in a new AP-Ipsos Poll. *AP*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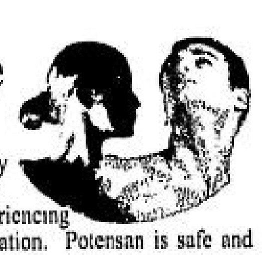
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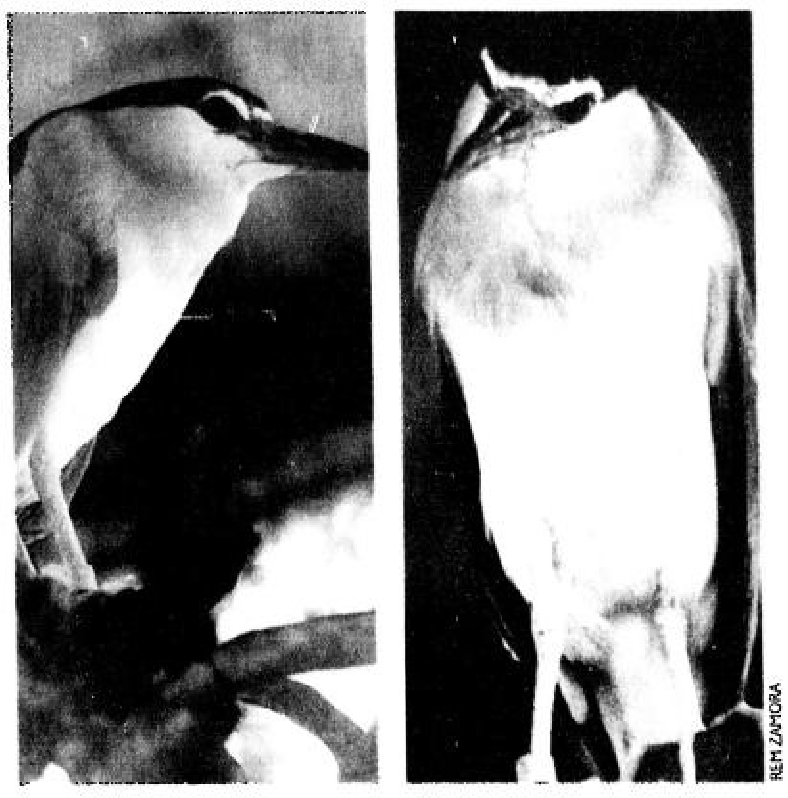
REM ZAMORA

WHAT'S IN A NAME? A prize for the winning names for the adopted herons of Makati City. Out of 360,000 entries received, three tied for the winning names—Mack and Kathy. Can you tell which is which?

City's adopted herons named Mack, Kathy

From page A1

ed were named Mack and Kathy.

The monikers were chosen from more than 300,000 entries sent to City Hall after it launched its bird-naming contest in April. Entries came from all over the country.

The selected names are a play on "Makati," which according to historical accounts originated from the local term for the ebbing of the tide.

Suggested names

Many entries suggested splitting the name "Makati" into two proper names, thus: Mak and Kati, Mak-Mak and Kathy, Mack and Katie, to Makki and Katti.

And while they all sounded like "Mack and Kathy," the winning names stood out because they sounded familiar and were spelled simply.

"The names sounded and were spelled like real names," said Joey Salgado, chief of the city's Information and Community Relations Department (ICRD).

Henceforth, Mack and Kathy will refer to the male and female herons the city adopted in April from their rescuers, the Parks and Wildlife Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The birds are housed in separate aviaries at the Makati Park and Garden in Barangay West Rembo.

City a bird sanctuary

Early this year, Makati officials passed an ordinance declaring the city a bird sanctuary.

The ICRD picked the winning names yesterday, out of 368,300 entries posted on the city's website (www.makati.gov.ph) and 68 others that were faxed, mailed or personally brought to City Hall.

Three entries tied, since the suggested names were all spelled the same way. The winners were Manuel Ortega, a lawyer at the Philamlife Tower on Paseo de Roxas Avenue, Makati; and John Joseph Sanchez and Marlon Labuguen, who both indicated their names and mobile numbers in their entries.

The winners will receive special heron statuettes, which the city had ordered as a tribute to the heron, recently declared the city's icon. Herons were said to be abundant in Makati in the 16th century.

A number of interesting names were submitted, some with traditional or historical appeal. Among them were Lakas and Ganda, Maharlika and Malaya, Adam and Eva, Lingkod-Bayan and Kalayaan, Kaunlaran at Kalikasan, Makisig and Luwalhati, Banyuhay and Punlay, Malakas and Maganda, Yin and Yang, Baron and Baroness, Heron and Heroine.

There was even one suggestion that the herons be named Mike and Gloria, possibly in reference to President Macapagal-Arroyo and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

FCMC 3324/2006

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE
HONGKONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
MATRIMONIAL CAUSES NO. 3324 OF 2006

BETWEEN

MARIA LIZA M. LIM Petitioner
Also known as **LIM, MARIA LIZA MUSNI**

And

EDGAR M. SANCHEZ Respondent

A DIVORCE PETITION HAS BEEN FILED AGAINST THE UNDER-MENTIONED EDGAR M. SANCHEZ, late of unknown address, may apply at the Family Court Registry at M2, Wanchai Law Court, No.12 Harbour Road, Hong Kong SAR for a copy of the Petition. If within one month he has not communicated with the Registry, the Court may hear the case in his absence.

Register

To be advertised as follows :-
Once in Philippine Daily Inquirer
(PDI–June 14, 2006)

FCMC 1327/2005

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE
HONGKONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
MATRIMONIAL CAUSES NO. 1327 OF 2005

BETWEEN

DELOS REYES, RAMIR S. Petitioner

And

BORJA, LUCIA ANTONIO Respondent

A DIVORCE PETITION HAS BEEN FILED AGAINST THE UNDER-MENTIONED BORJA, LUCIA ANTONIO, whose address is unknown, may apply at the Family Court Registry at M2, Wanchai Law Court, No.12 Harbour Road, Hong Kong SAR for a copy of the Petition and the accompany documents. If within one month he has not communicated with the Registry, the Court may hear the case in her absence.

Register

To be advertised as follows :-
Once in Philippine Daily Inquirer
(PDI–June 14, 2006)

Students blame CHEd memo for increase in college tuition

By Alcuin Papa

MORE THAN ONE-FOURTH OF ALL PRIVATE colleges and universities in the country raised their tuition this year, militant students said yesterday.

Citing data from the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd), the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) said that of the 1,428 private higher education institutions (HEIs) in the country, 27.31 percent or 390 schools raised their rates.

Of the schools that hiked their fees, 194 raised theirs by more than the national inflation rate of 7.6 percent, while 196 increased their fees by less than or equivalent to the inflation rate.

The average percentage of increase among all 390 schools was 9.53 percent with a peso equivalent of P31.04 per unit.

The CHEd, through its Memorandum Order No. 14, had pegged allowable tuition increases to the current inflation rate, which this year stood at 7.6 percent. Any increases above that would have to be approved after consultations with students, parents and other educational stakeholders.

The data was presented by CHEd to the House of Representatives on June 2.

NUSP president Marco de los Reyes pointed to the memorandum as the primary culprit behind the tuition increases.

"Contrary to the idea being peddled by CHEd that its memo No. 14 is a tuition cap, we see no decrease in the number of schools whose proposed increases it had approved regardless of whether the proposals were above or below the inflation rate," De los Reyes said.

He said the House committee on higher and technical education concluded in a hearing last week that memo No. 14 was "useless" in regulating tuition and other fees. The committee went so far as to say the memorandum was "unconstitutional."

The Kabataan Party, meanwhile, yesterday called for a refund of all tuition and miscellaneous fee increases that were not subjected to consultation with the students.

"The [committee's] recent statement validates our long-held apprehensions and opposition to MO 14," Kabataan Party president Raymond Palatino said.

Palatino said the committee's findings came too late as the enrollment period was winding down then. He said Congress should have deliberated the matter earlier given that memorandum No. 14 had been around since last year.

He said the committee's findings should come with an order to refund the increase amounts that had not been consulted with the students and the suspension of the memo.

"Congress should make up for its shortcomings and order the immediate refund of all proceeds from illegal tuition and miscellaneous fee hikes," Palatino said.

DepEd warns 'loan agents'

DEPARTMENT OF Education employees acting as agents of private lenders have been warned to desist from their activities or face sanctions like suspension.

DepEd Officer in Charge Fe Hidalgo said in a statement yesterday the department had received complaints from teachers and other department personnel of some employees acting as loan agents and controlling paycheck releases in DepEd field offices.

The paychecks are released directly to the private lending institutions that lent money to the teachers and other personnel despite the lack of letters of authorization from the borrowers.

"This scenario is a clear violation of Commission on Audit circulars," Hidalgo said.

She said that under COA rules the salaries of government employees shall be paid directly to them unless instructed to do otherwise through a power of attorney or other form of authorization from the employee concerned.

Hidalgo said any DepEd employee caught moonlighting for private lenders "shall be deemed to have a conflict of interest and can be charged administratively or suspended for such."

She urged other DepEd employees who may have been victimized by the loan agents to come forward and identify them. *Alcuin Papa*

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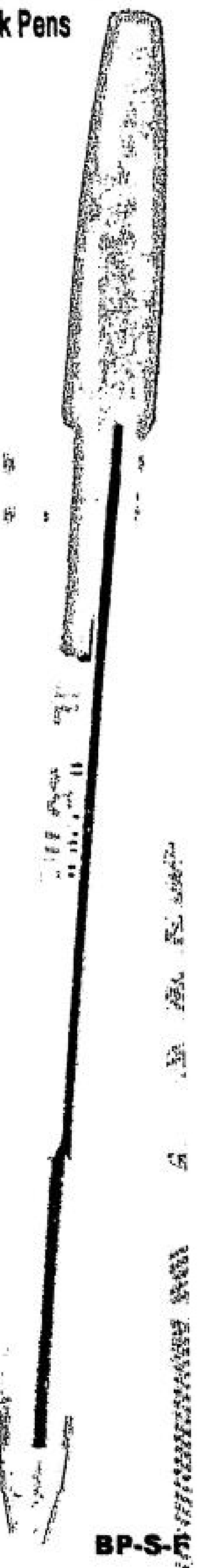

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'Sheer folly'

EDITORIAL

CHIEF JUSTICE ARTEMIO PANGANIBAN HAS given new life to the death penalty debate, by repeating his position on the case of Leo Echegaray, the house painter who became the first man to be executed after capital punishment was re-imposed in the Philippines. The furor over his remarks can be explained in part because of the present context: The Senate and the House have just repealed the death penalty law and the law that provides for the use of lethal injection in executions. Only in part, however, since much of the controversy can be explained by the fact that it was the Chief Justice talking about the possibility of "judicial error" in a high-profile case.

First things first. Let us get the absurd viewpoint, as articulated by the likes of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, out of the way. Panganiban's assertion that a judicial error may have been committed is not a belated revelation, as a gloating Gonzalez suggested last week, that the Supreme Court makes mistakes. Of course it does, and the possibility is taken fully into account in the process of adjudication. What is the motion for reconsideration, for example, but a legal device based on the assumption that a judge—or an exaltation of Supreme Court justices—may have made a mistake in appreciating the facts and the law in a given case? Why did Solicitor General Edgardo Nachura file motions for reconsideration on the PP 1017, EO464, and CPR cases, if his boss did not believe that the Supreme Court was in fact mistaken?

Gonzalez's view was nothing more than a politically partisan reading of Panganiban's position on the Echegaray case. And what was that position, exactly? After several days of reporting, we can now clearly define its shape. It was a personal opinion, consistent with Panganiban's record of opposition to capital punishment and with his vote in the case itself, raised before in books he had authored, and raised again on May 31, during the launch of a book by the Free Legal Assistance Group, on the death penalty.

The Supreme Court's spokesperson, Ismael Khan, emphasized that the Court "will stand by its [1996] decision." He also went out of his way to stress the non-institutional nature of Panganiban's remarks, saying, "He has stated this as his personal view and he certainly did not mean to foist it on the other members of the court."

Panganiban himself is aware of the true (or at least principal) cause of the controversy. Speaking in Filipino to reporters during Independence Day rites at the Bonifacio Monument in Caloocan City, he said: "I cannot be accused of saying it only now because I have been talking about it [for years]. No one listened, only now that I am the chief justice."

The controversy reminds us that certain offices in public service have a built-in bully pulpit, a platform from which to address the body politic. The presidency has the most famous and the widest reach, but that of the head of the judiciary is not inconsiderable. To be sure, not all lawyers agreed that the nation's first lawyer should even set foot inside his bully pulpit. Some are of the opinion that no chief justice should try to set the national agenda through means other than court decisions. Some are uncomfortable with the idea of a judge—especially if he is the country's chief judge—discoursing on matters best left to either legislation or the electoral process.

But the controversy also reminds us that, in capital punishment cases, there really is no remedy for judicial error. This reality remains the main argument for its abolition. The Chief Justice told reporters the other day that all he had intended to do during his speech was to show "the sheer folly" of the death penalty. We think he has done that. He has noted persuasively that an essential fact in the Echegaray case—that the convict was the victim's stepfather—was assumed, rather than proven. "It does not mean that he was not a rapist. The only question is what could have been the penalty," Panganiban said.

And that is exactly the point: Despite the error, there is no longer any other penalty possible for Echegaray today. Once a man is executed, he stays executed.

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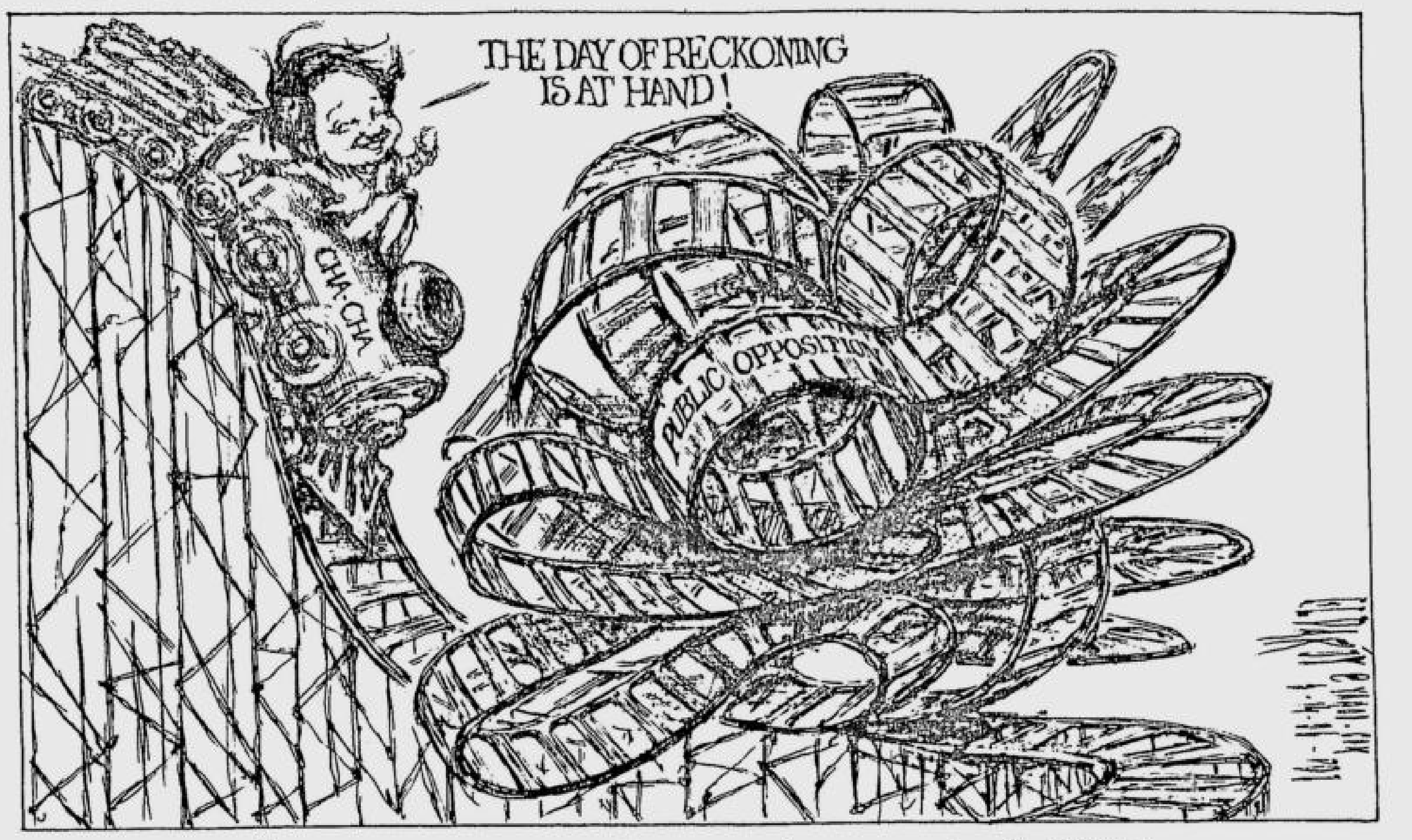
THE DAY OF RECKONING IS AT HAND!
CHA-CHA
PUBLIC OPPOSITION

The Supreme Court is not infallible

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE ADMISSION BY CHIEF JUSTICE Artemio Panganiban that the Supreme Court may have erred in allowing the execution of Leo Echegaray proves once again that the Court or its members are not infallible. Like everyone else, they are ordinary mortals who can make mistakes. So what right do they have to decide whether a person lives or dies?

But the greatest sin of the Supreme Court is in its refusal to admit it made a mistake if it does make one. Is it out of pride or out of fear that it would lose credibility if it admitted committing an error?

In this sense, the Court acts like a dictator. It can overturn decisions of the President and Congress, but the latter two cannot overturn the Court's decisions. If it says black is white or that a line is straight even if it is crooked, they stay white and crooked in the record books. The boy who said truthfully that the emperor had no clothes would have been clamped in jail for contempt if there had been a Supreme Court in his time.

* * *

President Joseph Estrada's spokesperson, former Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, claims that the tribunal also made a mistake in ruling that Erap had resigned from the presidency, and that the SC should correct its mistake. Fat chance.

The Erap case has been debated repeatedly in law schools and majority of students agree that the former president may have been dealt the shorter end of the law. These are the uncontested facts: A president can be removed by 1. death, 2. permanent disability, 3. impeachment, or 4. resignation. Erap is 1. still alive; 2. not disabled; 3. the impeachment procedure against him was not finished; and 4. he has not written a letter of resignation.

With the first three reasons totally blocked, the justices only had the last, resignation, to depend on to justify the takeover by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. But there is no letter of resignation in existence. So the justices invented one. Erap, they said, "resigned constructively," meaning he was assumed to have resigned based on diaries written, not by him but by his executive secretary, Edgardo Angara. Angara, by the way, was never presented as witness to identify his diary during the impeachment trial, yet this diary was used as the principal evidence by the Court. So Erap was booted out and GMA took over, and we haven't had any peace since then. Erap was knocked out on a technicality.

Any legal mind who is not a Supreme Court justice will clearly see that Erap's ouster was below the belt, and Dilangalen has asked the Court to correct the error and give justice to Erap. Although that is what should be done if there is real justice, that is like wishing for the moon. The Court, as it is now composed, will never publicly admit committing such an error even if deep in their hearts, the justices know they did. Instead, they would reason out that what they did was for the good of the country and that, in the case of at least two justices—who based their decision on passages in the Bible that met their eyes when they opened it—it was what God wanted them to do.

If God really wanted that to happen, He must have made a mistake, too. Look what it has done to the country.

* * *

A more recent example of an error committed by the Court which it refuses to correct or even acknowledge is the case of Damaso R. Flores vs. Rolando Ligon.

Flores had leased from Ligon the Parañaque Cockpit Stadium (now named Roligon Mega Cockpit). In January 1985, Ligon filed a suit against Flores for collection of his debts amounting to P1,869,700. Flores entered into a compromise agreement in which he paid P200,000 accrued interest on his loans, P300,000 equivalent to a first instalment of P250,000 plus interest thereon. Ligon encashed the check but filed a motion for execution alleging violation of the compromise agreement.

A long succession of motions and appeals followed and, to make a long story short, Flores won his case in the lower court, the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court. The cockpit was ordered returned to Flores with the income to be credited to Flores' debts of P1,619,700 and the excess, if any, to be paid by Ligon to Flores. The decision became final and executory on Nov. 15, 1989.

Despite four writs of execution, the decision was never enforced. Suddenly, on Dec. 10, 1990, the trial court reversed the decision. Flores became the loser and Ligon the winner. The cockpit was given to him and the residential property of Flores on F.B. Harrison Street in Pasay City (which was not even involved in the litigation) was sold at public auction to pay Ligon.

Flores appealed to the Court of Appeals and then to the Supreme Court. After they were given due course by the high court's Second Division, the petitions remained pending for five years. On July 29, 1996, they were dismissed by the First Division which ruled that Ligon's purchase of the Parañaque Cockpit Stadium from the heirs of Claro Cortes on April 18, 1986 was a "supervening event" that rendered the final and executory judgments in favor of Flores no longer enforceable.

However, a "supervening event" is something that happens after a decision has become final and executory. Ligon's purchase of the cockpit was on April 18, 1986, whereas the final and executory judgments were rendered much later, on March 28, 1988 and Nov. 15, 1989. The purchase was not a "supervening event" that could render the final and executory judgments unenforceable. Obviously, the Supreme Court had erred.

Flores has filed numerous petitions for review and reconsideration but they were all denied by the Court with a curt "Noted Without Action." Why doesn't it face the issue squarely and decide it with finality and clarity?

Games people play

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ONE PRIME MINISTER WARNED THAT HE expected an epidemic of illnesses to suddenly hit his country, or at least people saying they had developed all sorts of afflictions and could not go to work. The government and rebels of the Ivory Coast have laid down their arms temporarily after being exposed to it. And the candidates of Mexico have scrapped their campaign plans for the July 2 elections over the next weeks for fear no one will watch them.

Is it a virus more deadly than Ebola? Is it a pathological mania that has suddenly beset the world? Is it an alien invasion?

It's worse, it's the World Cup.

Largely unbeknownst in these parts, the world has ground to a halt. It has done so because of a crazy sport—the "beautiful game," as the Brazilians call it—or fanatical religion called football. Yes, football. It is not soccer, as a reader corrected me once, which is what the Americans insist on calling it, reserving the term "football" for their Super Bowl version of it, which has as much to do with the foot (my reader said) as chess does to the hand.

Contrary to rumor, the World Cup, and not the World Series—which is what the US calls its baseball finals, and which too has much to do with the world as George W. Bush has to intelligence—is the greatest show on earth. Michael Jordan's monumental contributions to thrusting basketball onto the world stage notwithstanding, it's Pele's favorite game that continues to fire the world's imagination. For half the world's athletes, the ultimate goal in life—the word "goal" itself comes from it—is to be able to play in the World Cup. To win it, well, it isn't just the next best thing to heaven, it is heaven.

To talk about it in these gloriously metaphysical terms is by no means an exaggeration. It truly has caused heaven and hell on earth: wars and economic disasters on one hand and truces and moral rejuvenation on the other. Honduras and El Salvador fell into war in 1969 because the three-game elimination match for the World Cup between their countries proved troublesome. That war claimed 2,000 lives and rendered thousands homeless. Germany itself, the current host of the Cup, has the "miracle of Berne" writ in its history, which was when it won the World Cup in Berne, Switzerland, 1954. The feat did not just revive the German economy, it revived the German spirit which had fallen to the pits after Hitler.

In at least half of the world, including the most powerful and influential part of it, excepting the US, everything has been pushed to the background. The results of the World Cup games are the news, relegating all others down the line. "Has the whole country gone mad?" asked a letter-writer in a British newspaper, sparking a debate about the true significance of football in society or indeed in world affairs. In Britain, it was enough to throw the Kashmir crisis to the government's back burner, Tony Blair preferring to send off the "lads" than to attend to his diplomatic duties. For one dazzling moment, governments have suspended politics, wars, and time itself and gone fishing. Or better still, to watch the games.

I personally am thrilled no end by it. There is something almost biblical about it, specifically the part where Jesus Christ says we will need to become a child again to enter the kingdom of heaven. This is humankind collectively becoming a child again, looking at the world with the awe and wonder of a child's eyes, and barging into the gates of heaven with the force of it. This is humankind stripping down to short pants, or girl skirts, again and thrashing about in the mud in wild abandon, the shouts of playful glee and carefree-ness thundering across the earth. It is magic.

Certainly, it is awesome in humankind abandoning at least for one fleeting moment its other games, the more churlishly childish ones as opposed to this wondrously childlike one, the ones that produce hell where the later produces heaven. The churlishly childish games of acquiring wealth and power by whatever means, those means now taking on the truly frightening aspect of a video game: The Iraq invasion was carried out that way, with no flaming bodies hurtling to their deaths—such as assailed the horrified eyes of Americans during 9/11—to strain conscience, only bleeps in consoles and the flashing sign, "Game Over," to strain the eyes.

By contrast, in the childlike game that is the World Cup, everybody wins. Even the so-called losers, the ones who get defeated in the field of battle by stronger opponents, never really lose at all, lifting as they do the spirits of their bedraggled countrymen, the better to soar on their wings through the tempests of life. Nations win, even if the governments of the teams that lose tend to flounder in the wave of frustration that beset their land, their mere appearance in the game of games, in the game of life, being a boundless joy enough in itself. Certainly humanity wins, in one blink of the eye of eternity showing once again the best that it can be, showing once again the angel that resides, or is held prisoner, in its beastly form.

What is football really but the seemingly ridiculous activity of frenetically trying to bring a ball from one side of a field to another without using one's arms and attempting to kick it to a net while others equally frenetically try to prevent it? But then what is life itself but the seemingly ridiculous activity of making the best of one's sojourn on earth as though one's deeds could possibly matter while Fate or Improvidence tries laughingly to thwart it?

For one dazzling moment at least, humankind is trying to make sense of the absurd, give a goal to the pointless, triumph magnificently in the game called football, also called life.

Squandered opportunity

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

IT HAS BEEN 108 YEARS SINCE GEN. EMILIO Aguinaldo proclaimed Philippine independence in Kawit on June 12, 1898, 60 years since the Philippines regained its independence from the United States on July 4, 1946, and 44 years since President Diosdado Macapagal returned the commemoration of Independence Day to June 12 in 1962, in an explosion of national pride that dwarfed previous national day turnouts at the Luneta since 1946.

In last Monday's national day celebration, the Republic, more than a century old, presented a picture of a nation in its worst state of disarray since 1946 and with very little to show by way of unity or economic progress, leaving many Filipinos depressed and asking themselves what has gone wrong with their country during the past 50 years.

It has been a half century of economic and political backsliding, particularly for democracy, and with this bleak record, occasionally broken by shining moments such as the People Power Revolution of 1986 and the economic expansion of the 1960s, which was the envy of the newly independent states of Southeast Asia, in the post-colonial period, it is not surprising that Filipinos have little to celebrate and to be proud of.

Last Monday, the theme and agenda of the celebration were not only less than inspiring as an outlook for the future, they also underlined the issues that have fueled disunity and political conflict during the past five years, especially the last two.

Filipinos have done very well and have demonstrated admirable patriotism to close ranks when they are struggling to throw off the yoke of foreign tyranny and domination, but after they won their independence, they have been less successful in forging a united nation under the rule of their native rulers, some of whom have been more abusive, tyrannical and exploitative than their colonial masters.

Independence Day should have been a day of celebration of national pride and achievement derived from the creative expression of talents and productive energy. It should have been an occasion to set a new vision for the future. But last Monday, President Macapagal-Arroyo set constitutional change as the theme of the 108th celebration of the declaration of independence, which set the stage for the establishment of the first constitutional republic in Asia in 1899, with the adoption of the Malolos Constitution. That Constitution provided the transition from the Aguinaldo dictatorship in a country at war to a parliamentary government whose embryonic life was strangled by the Philippine-American War.

In her Independence Day message, the President said: "Our people will soon be called upon to make a decision that can bring an end to the deadlocks that have stalled our efforts to take our nation to the next level. The choice is for us to make whether we continue to live up to the vision of our nation to continue to watch helplessly while our political system degenerates and our economy is mired by uncertainty." She was referring to the people's initiative, a partisan project being pushed by the administration as a mode of constitutional change.

By mentioning the subject of constitutional change, the President not only highlighted one of the most contentious issues of her presidency but also the debilitating conflict between the presidency and the Senate. Her message also repeated the pitch for constitutional change involving the shift from the presidential to the parliamentary system which she made in her 2005 State of the Nation Address.

As she spoke, the President underlined the division between the House and the Senate over two other modes of constitutional change: one via a constitutional convention and the other through a constituent assembly composed of the members of the two houses of Congress.

The President has been hammering on this issue over which the Filipino people are deeply divided, according to public opinion surveys. The contentiousness of this issue was highlighted by the fact that when the last Congress adjourned, it failed to pass the appropriations act for 2007, leaving the nation limping on the 2006 budget, after the Senate turned down the House version.

The political wisdom of emphasizing constitutional change as the theme of the 2006 Independence Day celebration can be questioned, since the national day is an occasion for lifting the people's spirit. But then there is little to inspire the people to euphoric heights in an environment of political discord.

The President will have another stage to push constitutional change in her next State of the Nation Address in July, an occasion for agenda setting where concrete issues and proposals will have their day. But in last Monday's celebration, she squandered the opportunity to present a vision for the nation behind which the people could rally.

Instead of the presidency monopolizing the agenda-setting function of the national day celebration, there were other groups who tried to break that monopoly, among them bishops and militant groups that had their own issues and agenda to project. The bishops warned of signs of "subtle dictatorship," a theme that is more related to freedom, and Left-wing activists marched not at the Luneta but in other venues to make the point that the nation is torn apart and in the mood to seek political change rather than celebrate the achievements of a modern democratic Republic.

So what?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I THINK WE'RE ALL AGREED THAT WE'RE NOT talking about choir boys here. I mean, the four American servicemen facing charges of rape are Marines, adult men presumably knowledgeable about the ways of the world.

And by and large, their defense strategy seems to take for granted the four men's privileged status as visiting troopers seeking an outlet for their "natural" urges. This, even if it means visiting a nightspot which their own lawyers wanted to paint as having an "unsavory" reputation, partying hard with other customers, and even carrying off one of these customers in their van.

On the other hand, the defense lawyers have made much of the accuser's presence at the club, even implying, despite evidence to the contrary, that she may have been paid for spending time with the servicemen. After all, their reasoning seems to imply, no "decent" woman would allow herself to be seen in such a place, much less enjoy herself in the company of four male strangers. Clearly, the lawyers are hoping to turn public opinion against "Nicole," painting a picture of a reckless, if not promiscuous, young woman who had it coming to her.

But Nicole's real crime, it seems, is violating accepted notions of "proper" female behavior, notions that are increasingly being challenged but which have long been used against women who have gone public with their charges of rape or assault. Unable to explain away the man's violence and aggression, lawyers resort to "blaming the victim," turning conventional standards of womanly behavior against her, dredging up her sexual history even if it's irrelevant to the crime under dispute, implying that she had somehow provoked, invited, agreed to and thus deserved what happened or was done to her.

What I want to know is why judges continue to allow such underhanded tactics in their courtrooms.

* * *

LET'S play a game of "So what?"

So Nicole patronized a club where the interiors are dark, alcoholic drinks are overflowing, customers are inebriated, and small, private rooms are available for all sorts of questionable activities. So what? What were the four men doing there, too? Especially since the US Armed Forces has declared that it has adopted a "zero tolerance" policy against sexual solicitation by servicemen on official assignment abroad. If they weren't at the club looking for some nooky, why did they run off with Nicole despite their rush to get back to their ship?

So Nicole was to blame for socializing with the Marines and presumably drinking so much that she lost consciousness. So what? Did she surrender her human rights thereby? What were four presumably sober—or at least conscious—men doing carrying her off and loading her into the van while she was helpless and semi-conscious? (We still don't know how and why she lost consciousness; she could have been drunk, drugged or clobbered.) And what kind of gentlemen would cheer on and goad their friend as they watched an act of sexual violence taking place?

* * *

SO a condom was found among Nicole's clothes after she had been unceremoniously dumped in Subic. So what? One of the defense lawyers has stated that this is the first time he has heard of a rapist stopping briefly to put on a condom before doing the deed. That's if you still believe the stereotype of rape as a crime of lust, where the abuser is so taken by the sight of a woman that he loses all conscious thought. But all the condom tells me is that there was pre-meditation, that the rapist was not so out of it that he forgot to practice safe sex. And there were his friends to remind him of the threat of STD's, right?

So Nicole never mentioned the word "rape" or "sexual assault" when she was found half-undressed and weeping in Subic. So what? She could have been, at best, incoherent, confused and frightened out of her wits. And would a woman, dumped on the sidewalk of a naval base with a crowd milling about her, be able to find the courage and gumption to utter "rape" to a stranger? Rape victims have been known to deny their abuse to investigators and even to themselves, only to recover their memory after some time and counseling. It is, after all, a traumatic experience, to which the mind's instinctive response is denial and amnesia. Where do the defense lawyers (and some prosecutors and judges) get their cues on human behavior, anyway—from the movies?

* * *

COMMENTING on reports that Nicole had broken down in court and hastily left the courtroom while a Chinese businessman was recounting how she had been dumped on the pavement, Dr. June Pagaduan Lopez, who is providing counseling services for Nicole and her family, speculates that she must have been severely distressed by the witness' account which she was hearing for the first time.

As is common with many victims of post-traumatic stress disorder, Nicole had distanced herself emotionally from the memory of her trauma, says Dr. Lopez. But, "now, with the hearings...she is faced with having to deal with another set of symptoms—no longer depression and confusion but more of flashbacks, nightmares and rage."

But, says Dr. Lopez, these are to be expected, and are "more manageable and transient." The brain is an extremely complex organ and also very protective of the owner. It can blur memory and soften the impact of trauma. But it never fully abandons experience. Memory is bound to return, whether in bits and pieces, or in a flood.

However the trial turns out, Nicole's ordeal is far from over and may in fact haunt her for the rest of her life. But how she copes depends a lot on how everyone around her, even the public, perceives her and her actions that fateful night.

Citations

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

SOME READERS REQUESTED THAT I PRINT ALL of the citations for the newly minted National Artists in this space. I was just thinking aloud and then hoping that media would refocus on the more essential part of the news and concentrate on the life and work of the individual artists, rather than speculate on whether or not Susan Roces would go to Malacañang to receive the medal and citation from President Macapagal-Arroyo whom she has accused of stealing the presidency not once but twice.

In retrospect, I shouldn't complain. If Susan Roces did go to Malacañang last Friday, the other six National Artists would have been marginalized further and, if at all, only mentioned in passing. Something like that happened during the last TOYM awards ceremony in Malacañang. Press cameras started to click wildly when the President handed the trophy to opposition Rep. Francis Escudero. Then the limelight was taken by megastar Sharon Cuneta the rest of the way. When this happens, the other awardees whose achievements should inspire us are ignored. Sorry *na lang sila.*

Each time National Artists are proclaimed, conflicting opinions arise, which isn't bad unless it is petty, personal, sour-grapes. All the controversy is a means to discuss the merit and relevance of the award first conferred on Fernando Amorsolo in 1972. Last Sunday, Randy David and Sylvia Mayuga gave us some food for thought on whether these awards still serve their original purpose. It will take three years for a new batch of National Artists to be proclaimed and in that time, it is hoped that changes will be made to improve the selection process.

The citations for each of the new National Artists can be found in the folio published for the occasion, and it is hoped that both the CCP and NCCA websites will post these because I cannot print all of them here. Due to insistent requests, I'm posting the FPJ citation in English (the Filipino translation is more impressive):

"Ronald Allan K. Poe a.k.a. Fernando Poe Jr., a cultural icon of tremendous audience impact, and a multi-talented cinema artist and craftsman—as actor, director, writer and producer. Truly an Artista ng Bayan, he was an artist profoundly in touch with and affecting his community.

"His works embody a mythic screen and star persona, painstakingly created and sustained through many years in the films that he had produced, directed and acted in. His materials are the common Filipino folks' story of their dreams and aspirations, oppression and struggle. His achievement lies in his films' projection on the big screen—and beyond—of the values the Filipino *masa* hold closest to their hearts. This mythic image inspired his film audiences and tremendous fan following through the years from the late 1950s to-the early 2000, or nearly half a century.

"Where he played on screen the simple man, he was the personification of the common townsfolk—hardworking, humble and patient, but resolute nonetheless. He was the quiet underdog who rises in due time to redeem himself from oppression. Where he was the mythical hero, he was the folk redeemer out to liberate his people from oppression and bondage.

"The image of the underdog was projected in films such as: Apollo Robles (1961), Batang Maynila (1962), Mga Alabok sa Lupa (1967), Batang Matador and Batang Estibador (1969), Ako ang Katarungan (1974), Tatak ng Alipin (1975), Totoy Bato (1977), Asedillo (1981), Partida (1985), and Ang Probinsyano (1996). The mythical hero, on the other hand, was highlighted in Ang Alamat (1972), Ang Pagbabalik ng Lawin (1975), his Panday series (1980, 1981, 1982, 1984) and the action adventure films adapted from komiks materials, such as Ang Kampana sa Santa Quiteria (1971), Santo Domingo (1972), Alupihan Dagat (1975) among many others.

"Yet in 2002, in the second to the last film that he produced, directed, starred in—Ang Alamat ng Lawin—he revisioned his favorite film genre as well as the image and the significance of the mythical leader and talked in cinematic metaphors of an ideology that empowers the *masa*, specifically the Filipino youth. In this revisionist FPJ, the actor-director even questioned the dependence of the people on the individual, mythical hero for redemption, strongly suggesting that a people's liberation from oppression of all sorts lies largely in their own hands.

"In the early 1960s he led a group of actors who became the producers of their own films, choosing their own kind of pictures, unfettered by the demands of the studio system. He was a trailblazer and a leader of an earlier movement for independent film production. The honor bestowed on him by his peers, no less than the members of the progressive Directors Guild of the Philippines, is a testimonial to his craft as film director and auteur.

"FPJ made outstanding contributions to the development of Philippine cinema, and had a profound influence on the Filipino *masa*, his primary audience who finds his art accessible, relevant to their life concerns, inspiring and empowering. He was a pioneer in the film industry, constantly struggling for professionalism and unity, as well as recognition and respectability from the other sectors of the art community."

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

More on TIMSS

LAST WEEK, I WROTE ABOUT THE 2003 TRENDS IN International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) conducted in several countries including the Philippines. I had gone into the Internet to retrieve the international report (http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/2005005.pdf) and shared some of the dismal findings from the Philippines, while wondering why our government wasn't using the statistics to find ways to address the problems.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

A few days later I got a letter from a colleague at the University of the Philippines, Prof. Vivien Talisayon, who it turns out was the national research coordinator for TIMSS in the Philippines. She sent me additional information about TIMSS which should bring us some hope.

But before going into her letter, I did want to underscore the urgency of our educational crisis by sharing a bit more information about our scores compared to the other countries. For the 4th graders, we ranked 23rd among 25 countries in both math and science. With the tests for 8th graders (second year high school in the Philippines), the Philippines ranked 40th for math and 41st in science among 45 countries.

Among the Asian countries that participated—Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Singapore—we had the lowest scores for 4th and 8th grade science and math.

Just to show how grave the situation is, let me give the results of one of the test questions used for 4th graders: If there are 600 balls in a box, and 1/3 of them is red, how many red balls are there? Only 14 percent of Filipino fourth-graders got the correct answer for that item.

I think that should set the proper context for TIMSS and why need to act quickly.

Mining the reports

Let's move now to Professor Talisayon's letter. First, she describes how TIMSS is truly a multinational effort, conducted "under the auspices of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) based in Amsterdam and managed by Boston College in USA. Sampling was handled by Statistics Canada; data processing was done in Hamburg, Germany; IEA supervised translation of tests and questionnaires; and Educational Testing Service in New Jersey, USA, took care of data analysis."

I was glad to hear the Philippine government did invest in TIMSS. The local study, Professor Talisayon says, "was financed by the Department of Education and Department of Science and Technology, and managed by the University of the Philippines College of Education, in collaboration with UP National Institute for Science and Mathematics Education Development and Integrated School."

Professor Talisayon says the results "have been presented and explained to stakeholders in several forums" and a four-volume report is now in the press, for distribution to the Department of Education's regional and division offices and to the schools that participated. She agrees that the reports can still be "mined for secondary analysis."

I'm encouraged to hear that the government has this perspective about stakeholders, but hope they can explore ways to make the reports more accessible. I asked the professor if I could request for a copy of the report, but she said the print run was limited. However, she suggested uploading the reports on the Internet. I hope they do that since there's so much yet that can be done with TIMSS.

Teaching teachers

Professor Talisayon says that once the reports are out, the recipients "can examine areas and test items (skills and concepts) where students scored lowest and implement interventions, specifically, addressing these weaknesses and monitor the effect on student achievement of the class, school and division."

She acknowledges that our students tend to score lower in items that test abstract concepts, and that this was probably due to a lack of exposure to such kinds of questions.

UP has been offering courses for our teachers to help them change their teaching methods, going "beyond memorization" and giving students lessons that require more analysis.

I'm hopeful, but I wonder too how far we can go with teaching the teachers. Our current problems began many years ago, back to the colonial period, when we adopted rigid educational methods. There's still room for rote work but the times also demand a more problem-oriented approach. The question now is whether our educators are willing to move into such methods. Critical learning will also mean a more inquisitive population, something many of our leaders would loath. I'll write more about this in a future column.

Gender

Besides the matter of teaching methods, I pointed out last week that there was a gender angle that needed to be examined in TIMSS. I observed, from the international TIMSS report's tables, that in the Philippines, females did better than the males in both math and science. Professor Talisayon's letter clarified what was statistically significant:

"Internationally, there was no significant (could be due to chance alone) gender difference in mathematics performance (Grades 4 and 8). In science, there was no significant gender difference at Grade 4; however, at Grade 8, the boys significantly performed better. In the Philippines, the girls significantly scored higher than the boys in mathematics (Grades 4 and 8) and in Grade 4 science; there was no significant gender difference in Grade 8 science."

There we have it. Internationally, there were no statistically significant differences except in Grade 8, with boys doing better. Yet in the Philippines, the girls scored better than the boys in 4th and 8th grade math, as well as 4th grade science. Professor Talisayon suggests: "Maybe there are gender differences in study habits and class participation in our culture. A further study can look into reasons for gender differences."

This gender analysis is just one example of what you can do with studies like TIMSS. For years now, there have been scientists who say that "by nature" males tend to do better than females in math and science. The TIMSS study doesn't support that hypothesis: some countries have males doing better than females while others, like the Philippines, have females doing better than males. Moreover, taken as one international study, the TIMSS results did not show statistically significant differences.

The better performance of Filipino female students does give us another area to look at. But let me save the issue of gender, as well as the matter of teaching methods in our schools, for future columns.

I thank Professor Talisayon for providing additional food for thought around TIMSS.

Government has power to control nurses' exodus

THE DEMAND FOR NURSES IN THE US and other developed countries doesn't have to result in the collapse of our health care system. Public welfare demands that the private rights of the nurses who want to work in developed countries be regulated. The catchphrase here is "police power." If national welfare requires that private rights be regulated for three, five or ten years, then so be it. And with more reason should the State regulate the private rights of nurses who finished their studies in public colleges and universities.

It is not a question of whether or not the private rights of nurses should be regulated in favor of public interest, but to what extent those rights should be limited. In case of conflict between public welfare and private rights, the government should always uphold the former.

—RENE TORRES,
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Getting so much and giving so little in return

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE OUR FAMILY'S experience with the Government Service Insurance System.

My grandfather is a GSIS pensioner. He is 89 years old and very weak.

A few months ago, GSIS advised us that it was implementing a new policy requiring the personal appearance of pension claimants. Before this policy became effective, my grandfather would receive his pensions in the form of checks sent to him through registered mail.

Early this year, the monthly checks stopped coming. We reported this to the GSIS regional office in San Fernando City, La Union. Only then were we told that my grandfather needed to apply for his GSIS e-card so that he would regularly receive his pension.

We explained to them that my grandfather is 89 years old and is already incapacitated, almost bedridden even. We were then asked to submit documents to prove the same. We complied with the requirements, among them a medical certificate from my *lolo's* physician, a certification from our barangay captain as to his physical condition, photocopies of his IDs, etc., including his authorization for me to transact with the GSIS on his behalf.

Much to our dismay, the GSIS continued to withhold my grandfather's checks. We were later told that all pensioners residing in Bauang, La Union must claim their pension personally at the Bauang Municipal Hall on the first working day of every month. I then went back to the GSIS regional office to tell the concerned employees there of my grandfather's condition. I also reminded them that I have submitted all the documents the GSIS asked from us. They told me that the GSIS cannot bend the rules requiring the personal appearance of pension claimants and that it cannot honor any authorization letter of any kind.

If the GSIS cannot bend the rules, can't it make pensioner-friendly rules?

We are like most families of GSIS pensioners—an average Filipino family that doesn't own a car. Just to comply with the GSIS e-card requirements last month, we hired a van to transport my grandfather from our home to the GSIS regional office. And because the regional office did not have an elevator, my husband had to carry my grandfather up to the third floor of the building! There were simply no provisions to help incapacitated or very weak GSIS pensioners move around the office. Not even a wheelchair.

I can't understand how GSIS people can be so hard-hearted and inconsiderate—despite the high pay they're getting. They are getting so much from GSIS members but they do not give good service in return.

—MAFAYE MANGASER YMSON,
mafaye_ymson@yahoo.com,
La Union

Ecology warriors

AS I WAS READING THE ARTICLE "COURSE for "'eco-warriors' to be offered in schools," (PDI, 5/23/06) my heart was filled with hope and excitement. I totally support the proposal to have this course as an option in the National Service Training Program (NSTP).

I remember my first semester at the University of Sto. Tomas. I was standing under the scorching heat of the sun and there was a kind of chaos all around. And I was waiting for an ROTC officer to tell us cadets what to do. That was the time when UST was in the news limelight because of the murder of one of its ROTC officers who exposed anomalies in the ROTC program. I was not really familiar with the case. I was a freshman then. I ended up the semester feeling that the days I spent for my ROTC training were just a waste of time for I did not really learn anything useful.

If the "eco-warrior" course were available at that time, I would have taken it. I believe this kind of program will give the students a deeper appreciation of the unique natural resources in our country and the world at large, as well as a greater sense of responsibility to take care of the environment. Students will become businessmen, engineers and leaders of our country. If they develop a deep love for nature, they will not do anything that will destroy it. In fact, they will seek to preserve it, especially after they have had a hand in nurturing it during their days in college.

Let us be "eco-warriors," then we can say that we are fighting for a real, good cause.

—JAYSON PAGADUAN,
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What the Everest conquest tells us

IN REFERENCE TO THE EDITORIAL "Soaring high" and Conrado de Quiros' column "Because it's there" (PDI, 5/22/06), I—as any Filipino should be—am also proud of our three *kababayans*, Leo Oracion, Erwin Emata and Romi Garduce, for conquering Everest. I salute them for their daring achievement. For Orientals to conquer an alpine mountain so high that it makes the sun-kissed mountains of the Philippines look like "hills" in comparison, theirs was truly a feat. And I agree: "because it's there" is why people do it. For indeed, it is a natural, human need to prove to oneself what he or she can do.

But on a less personal level, the feat confirmed what Filipinos, armed with the proper mental and physical resolve, are capable of doing. And, surely for now, we have many "Everests" to climb. Consider the following:

- Adequately feeding, sheltering, educating 86 million Filipinos, who are multiplying by more than 2.3 percent yearly; and managing this growth to more sustainable levels;
- Injecting new life into our educational system and improving its quality so that it can produce the kind of graduates needed by our industries;
- Providing suitable jobs and decent wages to our large number of graduates and unemployed.
- Developing and setting up industries that can make us more and more self-reliant, so that we do not have to be eternally beholden to foreign loans and grants, which bind us to oppressive agreements with other countries;
- Aggressively rehabilitating our oppressed environment (polluted air, waterways and seas; denuded forests; exploited marine resources, etc.);
- Overhauling institutions that lack credibility and are perceivably corrupt, such as the Commission on Elections and the Philippine National Police;
- Changing our present set of so-called national and local leaders in the various levels of government—most of whom only work for self-gain and are incapable of inspiring and leading us in the truest sense of the word.

Forgive me if this sounds quite a downer, coming as it is amid the uplifting reports of our *kababayans'* conquest of Everest. But then, the story also succeeded in making an ordinary citizen like me think of the mountains of problems we must "conquer" as a people. We must climb them because they're there.

—CORA C. DESPABILADERAS,
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ANGIE ANG, BUSINESSWOMAN

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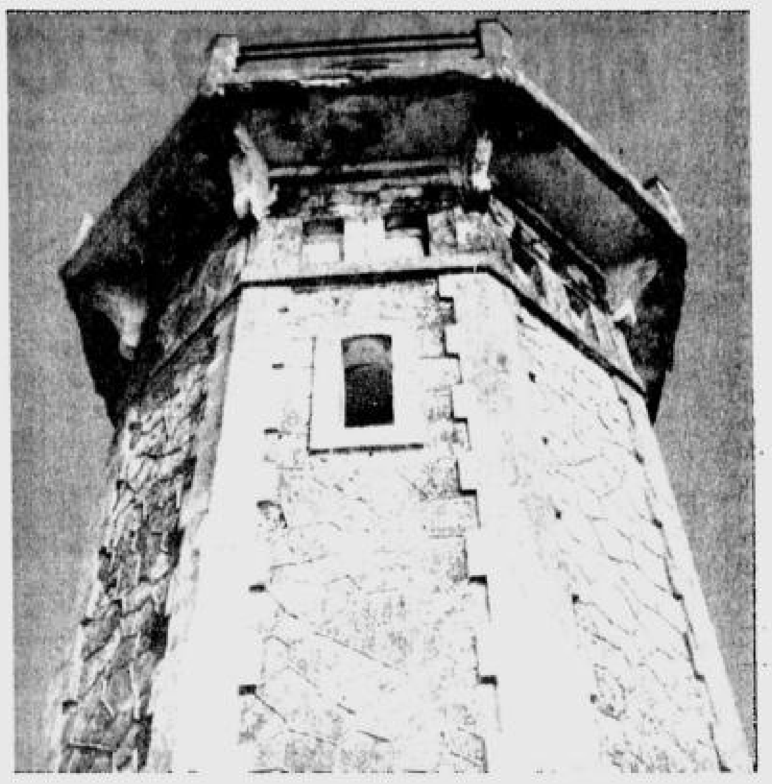
FARO DE CABO ENGAÑO

Cagayan's guiding light won't let darkness fall

By Melvin Gascon
Santa Ana, Cagayan

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second of a series of reports on lighthouses in Northern Luzon. The INQUIRER is featuring these century-old structures to highlight their importance to the country's northern sea lanes and call attention to their neglect.



THE 11-METER granite tower retains its architectural beauty despite the marks of old age and neglect.

PHOTOS BY MELVIN GASCON

TERESA JAMORABON WAS beaming as she recalled the years when living at the Faro de Cabo Engaño was everything she, her husband and their brood of nine could only dream of.

Her husband, the late Gregorio Jamorabon, was among the longest-serving lighthouse keepers in the Cape Engaño light station on Palaui Island at the northeastern tip of the archipelago.

From 1946 to 1968, the Jamorabons called the Cape Engaño lighthouse their home.

"It was wonderful. We were like living in paradise; we had everything we needed. We were happy because best of all, my husband was working while he had with him his family," Jamorabon, 80, said.

THE SOLAR-powered lantern remains a reliable guide for ships passing the Babuyan Channel, going to and coming from the ports of Santa Ana and Aparri.

The Cape Engaño is one of the 27 major lighthouses in the country, which, until now, continues to play a crucial role in navigation, especially for ships traversing the Babuyan Channel in Northern Luzon and the Pacific Ocean. It is under the supervision of the Department of Transportation and Communications, through the Philippine Coast Guard's lighthouse division.

Perched on the northern edge of the island, Cape Engaño is still regarded as one of the most beautiful lighthouses in the country.

Built in 1888, mostly by Filipino laborers, the structure has withstood the Spanish-American War and World War II, as well as the wrath of scores of typhoons.

Fortress-like

The fortress-like station sits atop a hill 92 meters above sea level, overlooking the Cape Engaño cove on the east, the clear waters of the Babuyan Channel and the Dos Hermanas (Two Sisters) Islands on the north, and the vast Pacific Ocean on the west.

It is said that Spanish seafarers who first set foot on the cape were so enthralled by its natural beauty that they named it Engaño.

From the Santa Ana town proper, the station can be reached by a 30-minute boat ride from the Barangay San Vicente port, going northward and docking at the white sand beach of the Cape Engaño cove. It takes 20 minutes to hike the top of the hill.

The station has four major structures: The one-story main pavilion that serves as the office and the workers' quarters; two smaller identical buildings, which used to be the kitchen; and the storage and powerhouse.

At the center is the 11-m (47-foot) octagonal tower, whose protruding attic (the platform on which the crown and lantern rest) is visible from all angles around the cape.

Lighthouse families

According to Jamorabon, the complex used to shelter seven crew members tasked with maintaining the lighthouse. Their families lived with them.

It used to be like a castle, she said, describing how for a long time, it stood in all its grandeur, and how its lights used to glow at night like a modern city in the middle of the jungle.

Living there was the object of envy for many people in Santa Ana, according to Jamorabon, because, for one, it was the only place in the area where residents enjoyed electricity.

"Santa Ana was still then a dense jungle, so that when people came here, it was like they had gone to the city," she said.

Jamorabon described how well the government took care of the lighthouse keepers and the station. The workers' families lived harmoniously in separate rooms, but under one roof.

Their rations—rice, beans, noodles, cooking oil and kerosene—arrived every month and were shared equally among the workers, regardless of rank, she said.

Imelda Jamorabon-Leaño, 47, Jamorabon's eighth child, recalled how she and the other workers' children, coming home from school every weekend or during Christmas or summer breaks, found joy in watching ships as these arrived from the Pacific Ocean and the Babuyan Channel.

The lighthouse keepers also raised goats to augment their food needs. The forest and the sea were also abundant sources of food, said Leaño, now a grade school teacher at the Santa Ana Central Elementary School.

But the light station received substantial attention from the government only until the early 1980s, said Jamorabon, adding that assistance dwindled with the passing of recent administrations.

She has not set foot again on Cape Engaño since her husband retired from service in the 1960s.

Sorry state

But Jamorabon feels that pinch in her heart whenever she hears people's accounts of what has become of the lighthouse.

Today, the light station sits forlorn on the island and is in a sorry state of decay and neglect. It continues to be destroyed by elements, aggravated by the government's apparent apathy to preserve this cultural and historical treasure.

The windows, doors and roof of the main pavilion, as well as that of the kitchens and the storage rooms, have been destroyed, leaving only the two-foot thick granite walls intact. The rusting power generators are now pieces of junk.

The tower has also fallen victim to thieves and vandals. The eight bronze lion busts, which used to cling onto the tower's eight corners underneath the attic, have been stolen. Even its bronze marker was also pried off from the front wall of the pavilion.

The cisterns or concrete reservoirs, where lighthouse keepers used to collect rainwater for drinking and household needs, are no longer in use.

Treasure hunters had dug a tunnel underneath the main building and graffiti dominate the buildings' white granite walls.

But all is not lost for the Cape Engaño light station.

Thanks to dedicated lighthouse keepers like 51-year-old Cesario Sumibcay, who, despite the low pay and lack of adequate attention from the government, continues to ensure that the lighthouse remains functional.

The Coast Guard has replaced the lantern with a solar-based lighting mechanism, which required little human intervention.

Gov. Edgar Lara is optimistic that a joint restoration project that the provincial government was embarking on, in partnership with the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority and a number of nongovernment organizations, would restore the luster of Cape Engaño.

"This is why we are opening up the place to ecotourism to raise public awareness about the need to preserve the lighthouse and possibly attract future investments on the island," he said.

In search of Ilocandia's 'black gold'

By Cristina Arzadon
Burgos, Ilocos Norte

JUST LIKE A GAME, *GAMET* gatherers on the coast of Burgos, Ilocos Norte will outrun giant waves before these crash on treacherous rocks and corals where black seaweeds thrive.

But to skilled gatherers, picking *gamet* (black seaweed or nori, which is used as Japanese sushi wrapper) is like sticking a foot in your grave.

Gamet (stress on the last syllable), found on the islets of rocks and coral reefs off the shoreline of Burgos, is a rare seaweed that grows periodically from September to February. Its season is also a period where the sea is perilous as rough waves smash on the islets in different sites. The splash is said to be favorable to the plant's growth, which is also gathered in neighboring Cagayan province.

The late local journalist Arturo "Art" Palalay, a native of Burgos, pioneered the documentation of *gamet* gathering in the late 1990s. His family's seaside home is near one of the *gamet* gathering sites.

Palalay used to write for a weekly paper, dabbled on video production and eventually produced a video documentation of places of interest in his hometown, including the Cape Bojeador lighthouse, and *gamet* harvesting as part of tourism promotions.

He never got to see how his initiatives paid off. He died in 2002 or three years before his townmates launched the Gamet Festival.

But because tourism promotion is growing in Ilocandia, the Palalays built a roadside hotel in Burgos with a magnificent view of the Cape Bojeador lighthouse. The Palalay Hotel, rising from rolling hills, houses a public library named "Art to Heart" in memory of the veteran writer.

Mila Palalay said her late husband Hector dedicated the library to his younger brother Art as tribute to his work and his thirst for the printed word.

Many *gamet* gatherers prefer the *naslang* (locally known as the Gamet Island) in the coastal village of Pagali where the seaweed is most abundant. From the shoreline, the site can be reached by wading through a short distance of slippery rocks and rough waves.

Picking is not regulated. Both young and old residents have a field day collecting lush seaweeds with bare hands, normally at the break of dawn when winds are moderate, according to Councilor Joegie Jimenez.

Traders have yet to develop an accurate means of measuring the dried *gamet*. At present, a mat (measured as one *dangan* or from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the forefinger) fetches from P400 to P600, depending on its quality. Buyers do not mind the steep price, considering the risk that gatherers go through to harvest the iodine-rich seaweeds.

The Burgos Tourism Council has started helping gatherers market their *gamet* locally and abroad. It will also introduce a packaging material to make it more competitive and attractive.

A GAME OF TOUCH-AND-GO

GATHERING *gamet* appears like a game of touch-and-go. Gatherers wait for the waves to retreat before they start picking the seaweeds, then start running away from the rocks once the waves are approaching.

It is not a game, however. "Three lives have been sacrificed since the 1970s because gatherers were either untrained or they just didn't get lucky," said Burgos Councilor Joegie Jimenez.

Because it often grows in deep crevices of rock formations, the seaweed is gathered by using the thumb and forefinger.

Picking seaweeds is not a picnic because they are stuck in deep fissures. Gatherers use protective gloves to avoid injuries and make the task easier.

The harvest is placed in a *singapong* (fish net) and washed off in seawater to make the plants shinier.

The seaweeds are then sun-dried for days before they are sold. They are spread on woven bamboo splits (locally known as *akilis*) to facilitate drying, and rolled to make them even and compact.

Cristina Arzadon

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The bidding documents shall be available to interested bidders/suppliers at the BAC Secretariat Office, Rm 401, 4/F Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City from 1:30 PM to 5:00 PM, June 13-16 and 19, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee as indicated above. The pre-bidding conference shall be held on June 22, 2006, 2:00 PM at the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Administrative and Financial Services, Rm. 408, 4th Floor, Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Pasay City.

All particulars relative to the eligibility, bid evaluation, and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. LATE BIDS SHALL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

This Invitation is also advertised with the Government Electronic Procurement System (G-EPS) at www.procurementservice.org, and posted at the 4th Floor Senate bulletin board.

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat Office at telefax no. 552-6601 local 1602 (c/o Rose de Castro).

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(Sgd.) ATTY. ARNEL JOSE S. BAÑAS
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI June 8 & 14, 2006)

DA Launches AGRI-KALIKASAN Organic-Based Agriculture Program

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary

Messages

Empowering the farmers and fisherfolk in order for them to produce enough, accessible and affordable food for every Filipino is the Department of Agriculture's ultimate goal of existence. For this reason, the department continues to provide support services necessary to make agriculture and agri-based enterprises more profitable.

The department through the Bureau of Soils and Water Management has conceptualized the Agri-Kalikasan Program or the Organic-based Agriculture Development Program to help our farms obtain high yields we expect for a given cropping season through organic agriculture.

The Agri-Kalikasan Program is a science-based sustainable agricultural and rural development program that promotes safe and judicious use and proper mixtures of oil-based chemical fertilizers, recycled home and farm wastes and organic fertilizers.

Most farms in our country are heavily dependent on inorganic fertilizers to the extent that the farm's produce are being sacrificed. It is an opportune time then that the department is launching the Agri-Kalikasan Program to reduce the dependence of the farmers on chemical based fertilizers. Educating the farmers to manage wisely the farm wastes and applying nutrient management strategies will help them out of the chain of heavy debt burden from traders who finance their production inputs.

The program is a collaborative effort of the various government agencies headed by the Department of Agriculture, the private sector who believe that farm productivity can still be enhanced and improved through the Agri-Kalikasan program and the recipients of the program – the farmers.

For the success of the program, we urge you to support the Agri-Kalikasan Program.

Domingo F. Panganiban
Secretary

LEAGUE OF PROVINCES
OF THE PHILIPPINES

Prices of inorganic fertilizers keep on increasing but the farmers still depend on these with the hope of achieving higher yield for their farms. But in most cases, they are dismayed with the result of their production. This is basically true to all the farmers across the country as manifested in the information shared by our colleagues in the League of Governors.

It is good to note that the Department of Agriculture is dynamic enough in catering to the needs and improving the plight of the farmers. To avert the declining productivity of the land due to dependence on chemical and oil-based fertilizers, the department has orchestrated the Agri-Kalikasan Program. This is also to encourage the farmers to go back to basic sustainable agricultural and rural development program.

With the efficient and strategic implementation of all the three components of the Agri-Kalikasan such as the Tipid Abono and Balanced Fertilization Program, Balik-Pataba sa Bukirin or Rice Composting and Prevention of Rice Straw Burning, and the Integrated Organic Based Model Farms component, the program will go a long way in uplifting the living standards of the farmers.

We commend the Department of Agriculture for such a laudable effort and we assure you the full support of the League of Provinces of the Philippines. Rest assured that the program will be one of our priorities in our respective provinces for the benefit of our farmers.

More power to the Department of Agriculture and to the farmers!

Hon. Erico B. Aumentado
National President
League of Provinces of the Philippines

Agri-Kalikasan
Ating Isulong Organikong
Pagsasaka Malaking Tulong

DEPARTMENT OF AGCULTURE
Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM)
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. no.: (02)920-4382/923-0454
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Agriculture and Fisheries Information Service (AFIS)
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City
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Agri-Kalikasan Program for sustainable agricultural development

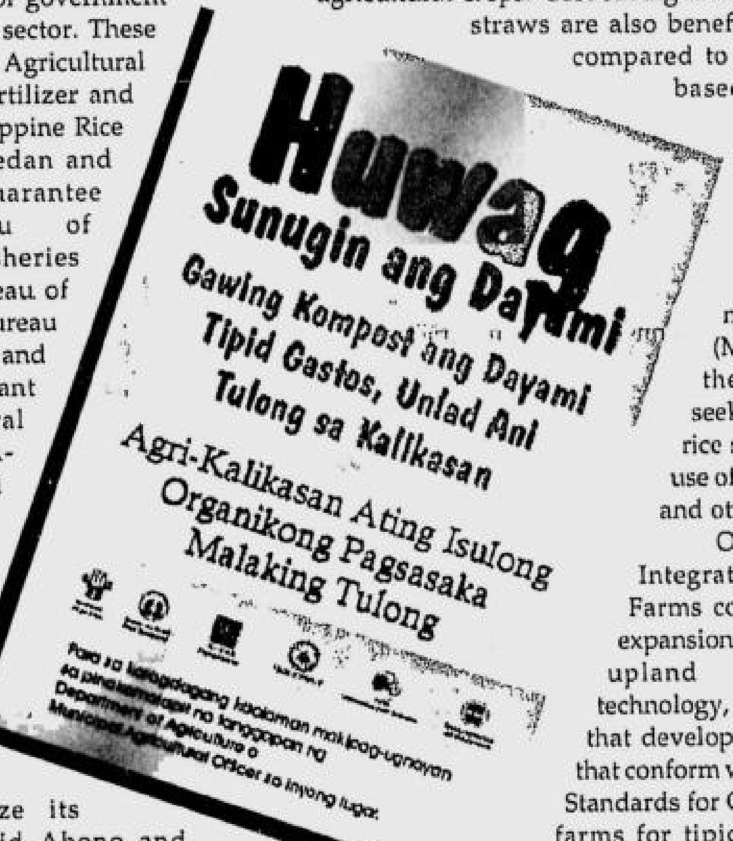
To minimize the declining productivity of the land due to long dependence on chemical and oil-based fertilizers and to reduce the vulnerability of the small farmers to the uncontrolled prices of chemical fertilizers, the Department of Agriculture (DA) will be launching the Agri-Kalikasan Program on June 14, 2006 at the Provincial Government Complex, Dao, Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur.

Agriculture Secretary Domingo F. Panganiban will lead the launching ceremony of the Agri-Kalikasan program and assisted by Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines His Excellency Ryuichiro Yamazaki and Bohol Governor and National President of the League of Provinces of the Philippines Erico B. Aumentado.

Highlights of the launching ceremony include the turnover of program funds worth P2.9 million to the provincial local government units (LGUs), farm tractors, and distribution of rubber budwood seedlings and polybags to municipal LGUs. Ceremonial vegetable harvest, vermicomposting and organic fertilizer bagging as well as performance demonstration of machineries and equipment will also be showcased during the launching ceremony.

The Organic-based Agriculture Development Program or Agri-Kalikasan Program is a science-based back to basic sustainable agricultural and rural development program that advocates the implementation of organic-based farming guided by scientific principles. It promotes safe and judicious use and proper mixtures of oil-based chemical fertilizers, recycled composted home and farm wastes, natural sources of soil ameliorants and organic fertilizers.

The program is the primary undertaking of the DA and is the strategic cost-reduction, environment-friendly food production measure that aims to reduce the dependence of vulnerable small farmers on chemical-based fertilizers. It is implemented by the Bureau of Soils and Water Management and is also being carried out through the collaborative efforts of government agencies and the private sector. These include the DA's National Agricultural and Fishery Council, Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority, Philippine Rice Research Institute, Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation, Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards, Bureau of Agricultural Research, Bureau of Postharvest, Research and Extension, Bureau of Plant Industry, Agricultural Training Institute, DA-Regional Field Units, Land Bank of the Philippines, Organic Fertilizer Producers and Organizations, and organic fertilizer advocates.


Huwag
Sunugin ang Dayami
Gawing Kompost ang Dayami
Tipid Gastos, Unlad Ani
Tulong sa Kalikasan
Agri-Kalikasan Ating Isulong
Organikong Pagsasaka
Malaking Tulong
Para sa karagdagang kaalaman makipag-ugnayan sa pinakamalapit na tanggapan ng Department of Agriculture o Municipal Agricultural Officer sa inyong lugar.

The Agri-Kalikasan Program has three (3) components to realize its objectives: 1) the Tipid Abono and Balanced Fertilization Program; 2)Balik-Pataba sa Bukirin (Rice Composting and Prevention of Rice Straw Burning); and the 3) Integrated Organic-Based Model Farms.

The Tipid Abono and Balanced Fertilization Program promotes the judicious use and combination of organic and inorganic fertilizers to address the increasing cost of fertilizers while sustaining the targeted optimum yield for rice and corn to ensure national food security.

The Balik Pataba sa Bukirin component focuses on the production of on-farm compost using rice straw with the aid of Trichoderma, a fungus that hastens the decomposition of biomass or farm wastes, in designated GMA cluster production areas to only 21-28 days. Composted rice straws provide varying nutrients, which are found to enhance the productivity of agricultural crops. Cost-saving and effective, composted rice straws are also beneficial to the environment compared to using chemical and oil-based fertilizers. A unified campaign on this component is a joint effort between the DA and the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) where a memorandum of agreement (MOA) was signed between the DA and the governors seeking to ban the burning of rice straw and encouraging the use of rice straw compost for rice and other crop production.

On the other hand, the Integrated Organic-Based Model Farms component encourages the expansion of alternative pure organic upland and rainfed farming technology, low external input system that develops special organic products that conform with the Philippine National Standards for Organic Agriculture. Model farms for tipid abono fertilization and massive composting for solid waste reduction for rural communities will be built. These model farms will serve as learning centers wherein the farmers can exchange and share information on organic-based farming among farmers, agricultural technicians and local academe.

AGRI-KALIKASAN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE
Launching Program

Venue: Provincial Government Complex
Dao, Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur

Welcome Address	***Hon. Aurora E. Cerilles*** Governor, Zamboanga del Sur
Project Brief	***Director Rogelio Concepcion*** Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM)
Message of Commitment	***Hon. Isidro E. Real, Jr.*** Representative, 1st District, Zamboanga del Sur ***Hon. Antonio H. Cerilles*** Representative, 2nd District, Zamboanga del Sur
Inspirational Message	***His Excellency Ryuichiro Yamazaki*** Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines

Turnover of Progam Funds to the Provincial LGUs
(Sec. Domingo F. Panganiban and Ambassador Yamazaki, to Gov. Aumentado to National Vice Presidents)

LUZON - Gov. Joel Reyes *(Palawan)* - National Vice President, LPP
VISAYAS - Gov. Rosette Lerias *(Southern Leyte)* - National Vice President, LPP
MINDANAO - Gov. Robert Lyndon Barbers *(Surigao)* - National Vice President, LPP

LGU Response	***Hon. Erico B. Aumentado*** Governor, Bohol National President, eague of Governors
Introduction of Guest Speaker	***Dr. Oscar Parawan*** Regional Executive Director, DA-RFU IX
Keynote Address	***Hon. Domingo F. Panganiban*** Secretary, Department of Agriculture

Turnover of Farm Tractors and KR2-funded slaughterhouses
Distribution of Rubber Budwood Seedlings and Polybags to Municipal LGUs
Ceremonial Vegetables Harvest, Vermicomposting and Organic Fertilizer Bagging
Performace Demonstration of Machineries and Equipment

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Troops sent to C. Luzon urban areas

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—ARMY MAJ. GEN. Jovito Palparan Jr. has repositioned his troops in key cities and towns in Pampanga and Bulacan, a counterinsurgency move never before done in Central Luzon in post-martial law years.

Palparan, commander of the 7th Infantry Division, on Tuesday confirmed to the INQUIRER the shifting of about 500 of his forces in the City of San Fernando, Angeles City and Mabalacat town in Pampanga and in Malolos City, Bulacan, Obando, Hagonoy, Pandi and Sta. Maria towns in Bulacan since last week.

He said he has also set up 17 detachments in Pampanga and 40 others in Bulacan.

"The enemy is everywhere so we have to be everywhere also," Palparan said when asked about the objective of military operations in the urban centers of those two provinces.

"We have to clear the areas of communists," he said.

This approach, he said, has been coordinated with local officials and the Philippine National Police.

This also sought to "stop the killings of friendly forces," he said, referring to barangay officials, policemen and civilians supporting the anticommunist campaign.

Palparan said the number of his urban-based soldiers was still small. Drawn from six battalions all over Central Luzon, they are organized in teams of nine.

"A nine-man team for every 5,000 population is small," he said.

He said he began the concept when he was commander of the 24th Infantry Battalion in Pampanga and Bataan in 1985.

Palparan is due to retire on Sept. 11, the deadline he has also set for "clearing" about 100 rebel-influenced areas in the region.

Angeles City alone has 10 detachments, Col. Ricardo Visaya, commander of the 69th Infantry Battalion said.

"We have to save the economic nerve center of Pampanga from collapsing. We have to deny the communists (a base of) establishing underground houses to be used in their liquidation operations. We have to stop the killings," Visaya said.

According to him, urban centers are used as staging areas for the operations of the New People's Army's liquidation units known as "sparrows."

The latest move by Palparan—called the "butcher" for about 500 cases of atrocities—did not go without protest from political activists who called it "a form of martial rule."

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Pampanga has questioned the deployment of soldiers in urban areas, saying the conditions in the province did not warrant their presence.

WHAT'S INSIDE

South Korea firm fined $5,000 a day for spill /A18

Fil-Am USNS Mercy exec traces his roots /A19

Original RP flag focus of Baguio June 12 rites /A19

14-yr-old girl injured in NPA, Army clash /A18

Benguet folk take hailstones, frost part of daily life

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

KIBUNGAN, BENGUET—NOT even local elders could explain why hailstones and frost happen in this vegetable-producing town.

That's why what the best farmers could do, according to Vice Mayor Patricio Pongsayan, is to accept the weather phenomena as natural occurrences, or as part of their daily farming chores though disastrous when they strike most.

Recently, the provincial government declared this town and Atok in a state of calamity following three hailstones last summer that damaged crops worth close to P50 million.

The storms happened on April 13, May 7 and May 9 as hailstones, as big as marbles, rained on and destroyed plantations of potatoes, cabbages, carrots and other highland vegetables.

Switzerland

Particularly damaged here were farms in Barangay Madaymen, known as the province's "Switzerland" because of its predominantly cool weather the whole year round.

Madaymen is the town's most populated barangay with 6,000 residents.

"Since no one can predict when they would come, farmers in Madaymen just work and work to be able to send their children to school," Pongsayan said.

Asked if the elders have an explanation, he said, "None. There is no interpretation attached to them."

Hailstones, called *dalalo*, usually occur during summer while frost, or *andap* in the vernacular, happens during the cold months of November to February.

Hailstones are ice-like raindrops in the form of small balls formed from nimbus clouds due to intense surface heat, said

Joseph Rios, senior weather specialist and chief meteorological officer of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) in Baguio City.

Frost, meanwhile, is ice that accumulates on vegetable farms and freezes and destroys plants.

Thick ice

Jerry Tanas, Madaymen barangay chair, said the frost, when at its hardest, could literally gather on the ground to a thickness of three feet and would take nine days to melt.

"But we have lived with frost and hailstones. We cannot escape from them and all we could do is pray that they would not cause so much damage," he said.

Tanas said he lost more than P100,000 to the hailstorms that happened last summer.

The figure included losses in terms of planting materials, fertilizer and insecticides, he said.

Dicine Pongsayan, the vice mayor's brother, said his farm lost P40,000 because of the hailstones.

"I am worried that I, just like many other farmers, would incur more debts because of what happened," he said.

Vice Mayor Pongsayan said the farmers are happier if rains or typhoons occur.

"At least, the radio, through the Pagasa, could alert as of the rains' coming and we could easily adjust our cropping strategies," he said.

ROUNDUP

Mayor Vi condemns bombing

SANTOS

LIPA City Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto denounced the grenade attack and ordered police to keep a tight watch on all public and populated areas in the city. Santos-Recto, a movie icon-turned-politician, lamented that the blast might adversely affect business in the city since most of those hurt were small entrepreneurs involved in chicken trading. "I just hope this would be the last because this is not good for our community and the country. Innocent people were hurt," she said in a text message to the INQUIRER. She said the city will not cancel the activities in the celebration of its foundation day on June 9-20. She said that despite several requests, the Philippine National Police has not acted on their demand for additional police personnel. "We definitely lack policeman in Lipa," she said. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

NPA attacks detachment

LUCENA CITY—New People's Army rebels attacked the detachment of the Army's Alpha Company, 76th Infantry Battalion in Bagong Silang, Tagkawayan, Quezon on Monday evening, Southern Luzon Command spokesperson Major Jose Broso said. The government forces suffered no casualties from the sneak attack that lasted just a few minutes, he said. Since Wednesday, two Army sergeants had been killed and two others wounded in a clash with NPA rebels in Lopez town. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr. PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Amok shot dead

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The son of a village official here who went amuck was shot dead when he tried to attack a police officer sent to pacify him. City police chief Senior Supt. Alfredo Toroctocon said Obet Belgica suddenly went berserk on Thursday evening and chased his father, San Jose village chief Alfred Belgica, with a machete. Other family members sought the police's help. PO3 Virgilio Damo was sent to pacify the younger Belgica but instead of listening, he tried to attack the police officer, according to Toroctocon. Damo, he said, was forced to fire on the amuck. "It was just in self-defense. But our office is conducting an investigation to get at the bottom of the case," Toroctocon said. He said Damo was restricted to quarters. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

MILF leader held

KORONADAL CITY—Government security forces arrested on Thursday a commander of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Tupi, South Cotabato. MILF leaders are normally free to move around if they are unarmed because of the peace negotiations. But Col. Carlos Quita, commander of the Army's 27th Infantry Battalion, said Jok Maulana was being sought for a robbery case. Quita said soldiers at a checkpoint in Barangay Tablon in Tupi flagged down a vehicle with unidentified men aboard and found they were carrying firearms. He said they later discovered the man to be Maulana. Maulana was turned over to the local police. "We also filed illegal possession of firearms against him," Quita said. *Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Recordable Customized Ringer							●
Key Lock		●	●	●	●	●	
Colored LCD				●			●
Large LCD with Blue Backlight			●				
Lighted Handset Keypad			●	●	●	●	●
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Intercom w/ 2-way paging					●	●	
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Dual Keypads					●	●	
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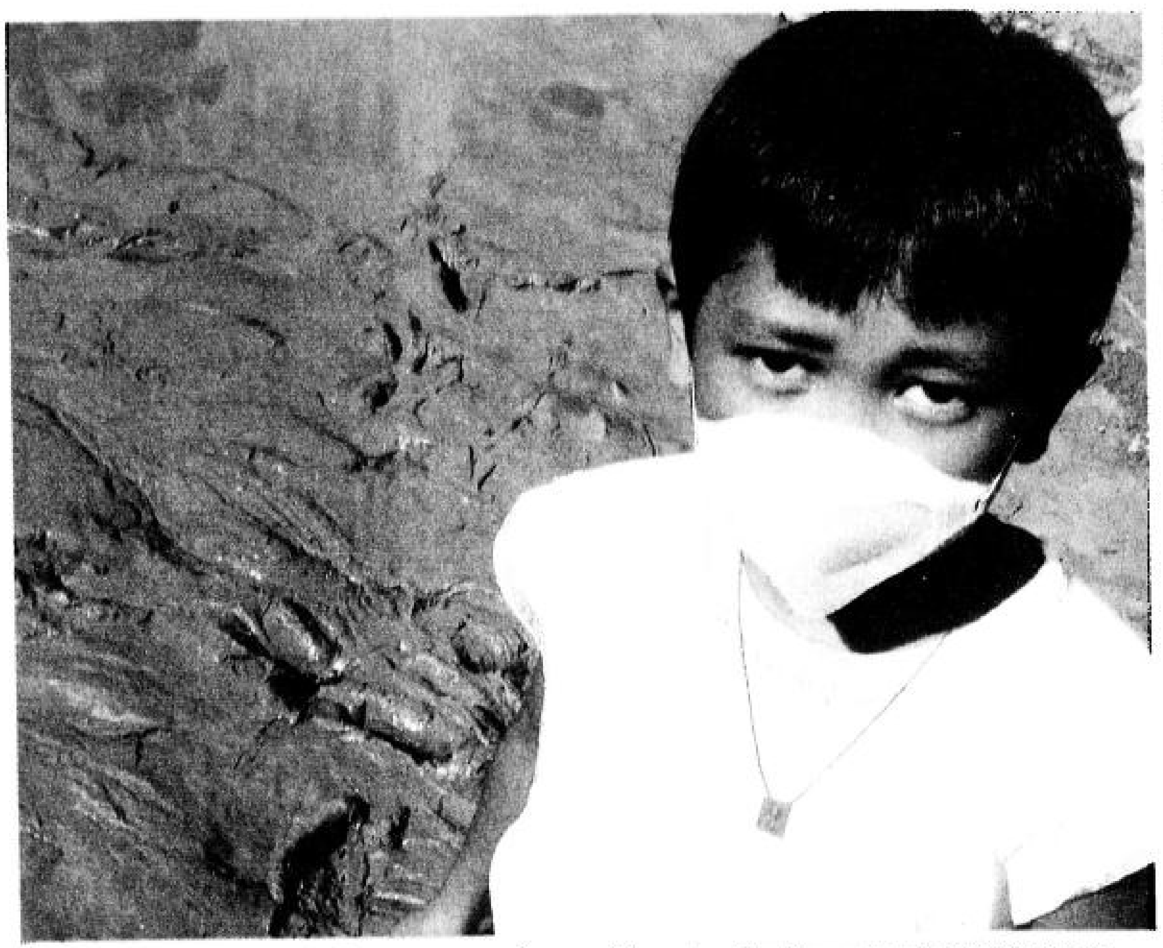
45,000 to be evacuated if Bulusan erupts

By Bobby Labalan and Niño Jesus Orbeta
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



A CHILD in a village in Irosin, Sorsogon uses a face mask to protect him from ash and sulfur that were thrown into the air by Bulusan Volcano. Volcanologists are keeping watch on Bulusan but said there was no imminent danger of eruption yet.

NINO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON

SORSOGON CITY—AT LEAST 45,000 residents from six towns will have to be evacuated if Bulusan Volcano erupts, the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council said after meeting with members of the disaster councils of the towns.

Lawyer Cesar Balmaceda, provincial administrator of Sorsogon, said officials have already mapped out a plan, dubbed "Oplan Bulusan," to move people out of harm's way in the event of an eruption.

Juban is the most populous of the towns with 11,775 residents; Barcelona has 9,845 residents; Casiguran, 7,668; Bulusan, 7,536; Irosin, 5,074; and Gubat, 3,356.

Balmaceda said the disaster councils made an inventory of vehicles, evacuation centers and hospitals to be used during an eruption.

The PDCC is also set to distribute chlorine and oral rehydration solution (oresol) to residents that are feeling the effects of ash falls and are suffering from diarrhea.

A medical mission will be conducted in Barangay Escuala in Casiguran, he said.

Evacuation centers

The PDCC would also check the availability of schools that would be used as evacuation centers.

"We want to ensure that these evacuation centers will be able to accommodate the big number of people projected to be affected in case of a full blown eruption," he said.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said the volcano had remained calm during a 24-hour observation period but alert level 2 remains hoisted, meaning ash explosions are still being anticipated.

Phivolcs volcanologist Dr. Ernesto Corpuz earlier reported that an eruption with magma was not yet imminent after conducting an aerial survey of the volcano.

Gov. Raul Lee, however, told disaster council members not to be complacent and to remain alert and vigilant.

"Better safe than sorry," the governor told the council members.

Lee, who chairs the PDCC, already sent heavy equipment to Irosin town to dig up rivers that could serve as diversionary routes for lahar flows should this occur.

Earthquake monitors

In Irosin, Phivolcs installed its fifth earthquake detector device to monitor further the activities of Mt. Bulusan.

Corpuz said the earthquake detector was installed in the upper portion of Barangay Monbon here yesterday.

He said the other four are located in Barangays Salvacion, San Roque and Urmahan in Irosin town and Barangay Inlagadian in Casiguran town.

He said the instruments were installed to detect earthquakes.

He also asked residents to look after the instrument.

Phivolcs previously reported the theft of monitoring equipment around Pinatubo.

Salvador Isidro Destura, Casiguran municipal health officer, said a child accidentally drank water with sulfur but was immediately treated.

Two more children also suffered asthma attacks and were provided relief.

Casiguran Mayor Edwin Hamor, chair of the Municipal Disaster Coordinating Council, said Sorsogon 1st District Rep. Francis Escudero already sent facial masks and relief goods. Sen. Manuel Villar also sent additional facial masks which are expected to arrive today.

Another volcano

In Bacolod City, trekkers are banned from entering the 4 km radius around Mt. Kanlaon.

Philvocs hoisted alert level 1 on Kanlaon after it emitted steam and ash.

Alert Level 1 means all visits within 4 km of the summit are suspended until further notice, Phivolcs said.

"In addition, areas fronting gullies leading to the upper slopes should be avoided because lahar and rockfall may affect these areas, especially during heavy rains on the volcano slopes," said the Phivolcs bulletin.

The Phivolcs described Kanlaon as in a "period of low-level unrest that could intensify." *With a report from Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

South Korean firm fined $5,000 a day for Subic oil spill

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—THE South Korean shipbuilding firm Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction Co. has been slapped a notice of violation for last Saturday's oil spill on Subic Bay, and fined $5,000 (P265,150) daily until a complete clean up has been undertaken.

The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority's ecology center issued the notice on Tuesday. It was addressed to Hak Kon Kim, project director for HHIC's 230-hectare shipyard on Redondo Peninsula.

'HHIC violated SBMA rules on...marine pollution...'

At least 400 liters of fuel oil spilled on the bay's water as the company's barge, the LCT (land craft transport) Consing sank while berthed at Sitio Agusuhin in Barangay Cawag in Subic town, SBMA ecology chief Amethya dela Llana said in a phone interview.

De la Llana said the area, which the HHIC was using as a mooring site, belonged to the jurisdiction of the SBMA.

HHIC, she said, violated the SBMA rules on prevention, containment, abatement and control of marine pollution. The rules prescribe $5,000 as penalty for the first offense.

Requirements

De la Llana also ordered Hak to immediately submit an incident report, conduct cleanup and recovery operations and submit an oil spill contingency plan.

The LCT, which came from MV Stella Cosmos, was transporting steel sheet piles to the construction site of Hanjin in Sitio Agusuhin when it went under water.

Gregorio Royol, head of SBMA seaport department's port operations division, said the oil spill covered about 1,500 square meters.

"The oil spill was already enclosed by a spill boom. The vessel crew and Hanjin personnel are recovering the spilled oil using rags and rubber foams, and putting them into empty drums," he said.

He said they have already sent safety officers to the site to monitor the oil spill. He said clean-up operations are being carried out.

Detergent

He said they were also using detergent to treat thin layers of spilled oil while additional spill booms had been installed in the area.

Assessments were ongoing on the damages to corals and other aquatic resources.

De la Llana confirmed that the Agusuhin area remained a fishing ground.

In December last year, a massive oil spill hit the coast of Semirara Island in Antique after a National Power Corp. (Napocor) power barge ran aground due to bad weather.

A team of scientists from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV), quoting preliminary results of a UPV-commissioned comprehensive study on the impact of the oil spill, said the social and environmental impact would range from a low of P22 million to billions of pesos.

The research team conducted studies on the island on Feb. 6-10 and March 9-13 to determine the impact of the oil spill on mangroves, sea grass and shells. It also assessed the socio-economic impact of the Dec. 18 oil spill.

The Napocor, in earlier reports, said it would shoulder the cost of the cleanup and damage and provide compensation and alternative livelihood to the affected residents.

An estimated 364,120 liters of bunker fuel spilled near Sitio Bobog, Barangay Semirara, the biggest of the island's three villages. The spill is considered the biggest in the country's history. *Tonette Orejas and Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

COMMERCIAL VALUE
A young man, wearing a copy of an NBA team's uniform, walks the streets of Davao City on the eve of Independence Day, hoping to cash in on whatever interest in replicas of Philippine flags that the celebration of Independence Day brings.

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO

Police say 'Rdx' used in Lubao explosion

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—The blast that shook the gate of the house of suspected "jueteng" lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda in Lubao, Pampanga, on June 9 came from "high explosives," a police official said.

Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, Central Luzon police director, said the residues contained cyclotrimethylene trinitramine, commonly known as "Rdx."

The bomb data center of the Philippine National Police in Camp Crame released the results of the test on Tuesday. Rafanan said investigators were looking at groups that had access to such type of explosives.

Police last week regarded the bomb to be made of "low-level" types of explosives. It left three plate-sized holes at the 20-foot high metal gate.

Police also ruled out the possibility that the bombing was linked to a jueteng turf war between Pineda and Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez.

Sanchez survived an assassination attempt on June 1 when a bomb planted in his vehicle exploded.

Rafanan said the findings bolstered the suspicion that the Lubao blast could be part of destabilization moves against the government.

A group claiming to be "Taong Bayan at Kawal" had claimed responsibility for the blast. The Pineda family had blamed the attack on the enemies of their private security personnel, a certain Mario Suba.

In Isabela, Director General Arturo Lomibao, PNP chief, said the police were analyzing evidence in recent blasts in Metro Manila and other areas to establish any pattern.

"There is a pattern ... there are similar circumstances and similar style of [bombings]. It seems that there is an effort to destabilize the government and embarrass the PNP. Let us look at this seriously," Lomibao told reporters in Ilagan town on Tuesday.

He said he doubted claims of the "Taong Bayan at Kawal" that the group was behind the attacks.

"We are not looking at any particular group although a new group is claiming these bombings. This is a shadow group, an organization without structure. Their claim is suspicious," he said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

14-yr-old girl caught in NPA, Army crossfire

LUCENA CITY--A TEENAGE GIRL was wounded when in the crossfire during an encounter between government forces and the People's Army rebels early Saturday in Barangay San Francisco, Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro, according to a report that reached the military's Southern Luzon Command based here in Camp Nakar yesterday.

Maj. Jose Broso, Solcom spokesperson, identified the victim as a certain Jennelyn Torres, 14. She suffered gunshot wounds in the right breast and right hand.

Reports said the the Army's 80th Infantry Battalion was pursuing a group of guerrillas in Sitio Calbot in the village following a tip from an informer.

A group of soldiers, led by one Lt. Itao, was immediately sent to the area and engaged the communist guerrillas, led by a certain Carol Saligumba alias "Ka Maya," in a gunfight.

"Lt. Itao ordered his troop to stop firing when he heard the victim inside the nearby hut calling his father's attention because she was hit," Broso said.

Broso pointed to the NPA rebels as the ones who shot the girl.

"The hut was in the direction of the enemy fire. The NPA continued firing while retreating and the soldiers could no longer shoot back," he said.

He said soldiers immediately brought the girl to the nearest hospital for medical treatment.

Broso claimed the NPA rebels suffered casualties. The bodies, he said, were brought by the guerrillas with them as they fled.

In another attack, a group of suspected NPA rebels fired at the house of an Air Force captain in Barangay Calumala, Sta. Teresita, Batangas also on Saturday.

Broso identified the official as Capt. Rommel Genete from the PAF's 740th combat unit.

Broso said Genete was having a late dinner with nieces and nephews when the gunmen fired at the direction of the house.

No one was hurt in the attack.

The guerrillas stepped up attacks on government targets following the failure of peace talks with the government.

The NPA is protesting its inclusion in the list of terrorist organizations prepared by the United States and the European Union. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr. PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ARMY equipmeht and a Japanese saber were among the relics of the second world war that were displayed by war veterans during the celebration of Independence Day in Baguio City. The celebration was also marked by protests by youth groups denouncing the killings of leftist militants.

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON

Baguio organized June 12 rites around original Philippine flag

BAGUIO CITY MAYOR BRAULIO Yaranon organized this year's Independence Day celebration around the remnants of the original Philippine flag, which is in the safekeeping of the Baguio-based heirs of the late Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo.

Instead of the routine Independence Day parade that highlighted previous Freedom Day programs in the summer capital, Yaranon opted for a torch-lit ceremony at the Aguinaldo family museum in Baguio.

The museum houses the original flag, which was raised at the balcony of the Aguinaldo house in Kawit, Cavite, on June 12, 1898.

Yaranon said he wanted to restore the first flag's glory. The flag's colors bear far darker pallor than the brighter contemporary flag, which is prescribed by law. It stands out because of a face that is sewn on the banner's iconic sun.

But it was Baguio's youth that defined the day's festivities.

At Baguio's Malcolm Square, residents enjoyed an early morning Freedom Day concert led by marching bands. The bands tried to upstage one another in a good-natured "battle of the bands."

But toward the middle of the day, militant students marched half naked through downtown Baguio, wearing only protest slogans painted on their chests to "mourn the death of Philippine Independence."

Snubbed rites

Anthony Karl Rivas, local chair of the National Union of Students in the Philippines, said they were protesting an alleged plot by the Arroyo administration "to end democratic freedoms by killing Leftist activists."

In Angeles City, national officials snubbed the Independence Day rites at the Pamintuan mansion in the downtown area.

Their absence and the lack of national recognition for the June 12, 1899 celebration held at the mansion prompted Martin Tinio, grandson of revolutionary Gen. Manuel Tinio, to say, "It's a pity. Everybody's busy staying in power."

The reenactment of the 1899 celebration proceeded, though. From the huge windows of the European-style mansion, theater artists reprised the roles of the major players in the revolution against the United States. They included Generals Gregorio del Pilar of Bulacan and Tinio of Nueva Ecija who led the Army parade toward the mansion, which served as general headquarters of Filipino revolutionary forces led by Gen. Antonio Luna, the seat of the first Republic and a presidential palace.

The highlight of the play was Aguinaldo's 1899 speech in which he called the first anniversary of the June 12, 1898 declaration of Independence in Kawit, as the "greatest event in our political evolution."

Frustration

"The Philippines is for the Filipinos," Aguinaldo's speech went. The actor playing Aguinaldo also reprised the part in which the hero waved the first flag that he raised at the Kawit rites.

The 1899 celebration was the last one the first republic ever held as Aguinaldo was captured on March 23, 1901 in Palanan, Isabela.

Officials of the event organizer, the Kuliat Foundation Inc., admitted being frustrated by the absence of national leaders.

Only National Museum Executive Director Corazon Alvina and National Commission for Culture and the Arts Commissioner Bambi Harper attended the affair.

In the City of San Fernando, the Pampanga capital, the city government held an elaborate parade where some 2,000 students and teachers held short street skits on historical events leading to the declaration of Independence at Kawit up to the 1986 Edsa People Power revolt.

In Tuguegarao City, Mayor Randolph Ting and local officials celebrated the 108th Independence Day with a simple parade, and floral offerings at the foot of the Rizal monument in the city. *Reports from Vincent Cabreza and Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Fil-Am exec in hospital ship traces his roots

JOLO, SULU—HE IS ALREADY an American citizen but for Henry Villareal, being a Filipino is one thing to be always proud of.

Villareal is the executive officer of the USNS Mercy, a US military hospital ship, which recently visited the province for a medical mission.

For the last 38 years, Villareal, a native of Bicol, has been living in the United States with his wife and two children.

But he said even far from his country of origin, he reminds other Filipinos that they should always be proud of their roots.

And one way of doing that is sharing with everyone his passion for Original Pilipino Music (OPM).

Folk rock group Asin and pop rock icon Aegis are his favorite groups.

"I really love the songs of Asin, the sultry voice of their lead female vocalist, especially the message their songs want to convey," Villareal said.

Asin's female vocalist is Lolita Carbon.

Villareal said as for Aegis, he likes their songs because they depict love and passion, which Filipinos are traditionally associated with.

"My children love 'Ang Halik Mo' and 'Luha'," he said.

Villareal said he always found time to translate words that his children, Jaime, 10 and Charisse Nicole, 12, could not understand.

"When at home and it's my break, we sing together in the karaoke. It's fun to see my children trying their best to belt out Filipino songs," he said.

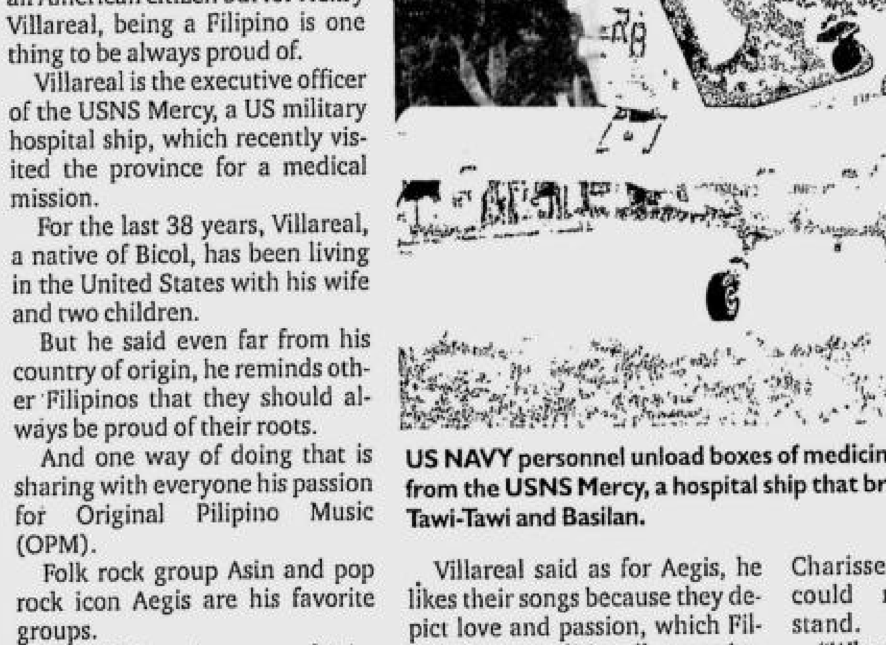
Even on board USNS Mercy, he makes sure that the Filipino and Filipino-American crew listen and learn to appreciate the songs from their homeland.

"I play it for them, so almost everyone here knows the songs already," Villareal said.

"It is a way of reminding our fellow Filipinos that we are still Filipinos and we should not forget this," he said. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

US NAVY personnel unload boxes of medicine from a US Navy helicopter that brought the medicines from the USNS Mercy, a hospital ship that brought free medical and dental services to residents of Jolo, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan.

AFP



US Ambassador Kristie Kenney receives a memento from Joe Moore, commanding officer of the USNS Mercy and Fil-Am Henry Villareal, commander and executive officer of the ship, during a reception aboard the ship.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pilar St., Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **Zamboanga City Water District**, through its Bids and Awards Committee II (BAC II), invites Janitorial Agency to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project: Janitorial Services to be Assigned at the Sewer Section and Watershed Area
Location: ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Brief Description: Janitorial Services
Approved Budget for the Contract: LOT 1: P 600,000.00 (PR NO. 8872); LOT 2: P 1,555,200.00 (PR NO. 8851)
Delivery Period: Lot 1: Contract Duration 1 year & Lot 2: Contract Duration of Eleven (11) Months

Prospective Bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Eligibility Forms. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examinations of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post Qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	June 13 to 19, 2006
2. Prebid Conference	June 21, 2006
3. Opening of Bids	July 3, 2006
4. Bid Evaluation	July 10, 2006
5. Post-Qualification	July 11, 2006
6. Notice of Award	July 17, 2006

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P1,500.00) for Lot 1 & Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) for Lot 2 to the Zamboanga City Water District Cashier.

The Zamboanga City Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) **ALEJO S. ROJAS, JR.**
BAC II CHAIRMAN

(PDI- June 14, 2006)

TransCo
Republic of the Philippines
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply and Delivery of Engineering Laboratory Equipment/Apparatus

[Reference No.: PB060322-EL0037]

1. The *National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO)*, through the *CY2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TRANSCO Board*, intends to apply the sum of *Php 10,156,000.00* being the Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Supply and Delivery of Engineering Laboratory Equipment/Apparatus**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening

2. The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for *Laboratory Equipment/Apparatus*. Delivery of the GOODS is required *within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of approved Purchase Order*. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure

4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders, starting **June 5, 2006 to July 4, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of ***Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2,000.00)***. The method of payment will be CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

5. The *TRANSCO-HO* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **June 20, 2006 at 2:00 p.m.** at same address below. Requests for clarifications on the bid documents should be submitted before the Pre-Bid Conference.

6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **2:00 p.m. of July 5, 2006**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form and amount.

Form of Security	Amount
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	1% of ABC
2. Bank guarantee	1.5% of ABC
3. Surety bond	2.5% of ABC
4. Foreign government guarantee	100% of ABC

or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

7. Bid opening shall be on **July 5, 2006 / 2:00 p.m.** at the *Admin Conference Room, same address below*. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

8. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No.: (632) 981-2235 / Fax No. (632) 922-8432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) **ARMANDO N. OCHOA**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - June 7 & 14, 2006)

Manila Water

Temporary water interruption in Quezon City needed to upgrade facilities

Manila Water is regularly upgrading its facilities and fine-tuning the network to improve the distribution of water in the East Zone. Because of this, a temporary water interruption will occur from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Thursday, June 15, 2006. The following areas will be affected: Bagumbuhay, Tagumpay, San Roque (20th Ave.), Masagana, Milagrosa, D. Zobel, Bayanihan, Villa Ma. Clara, St. Ignatius and Quirino 3A.

Manila Water Company advises all residents of the said areas to store enough water prior to the scheduled interruptions to avoid inconvenience.

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(PDI - June 14 2006)

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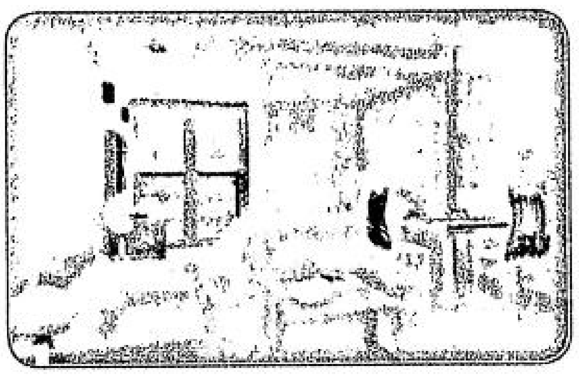

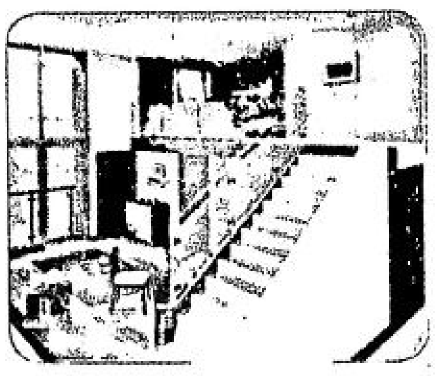

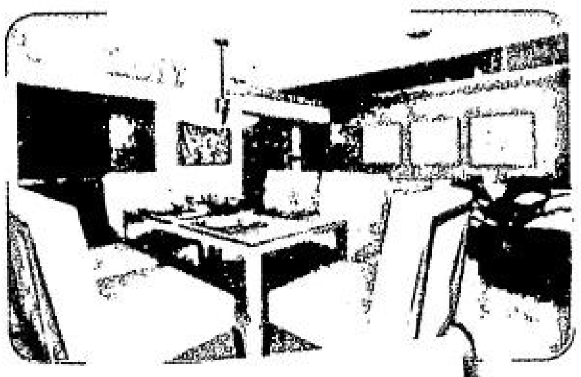

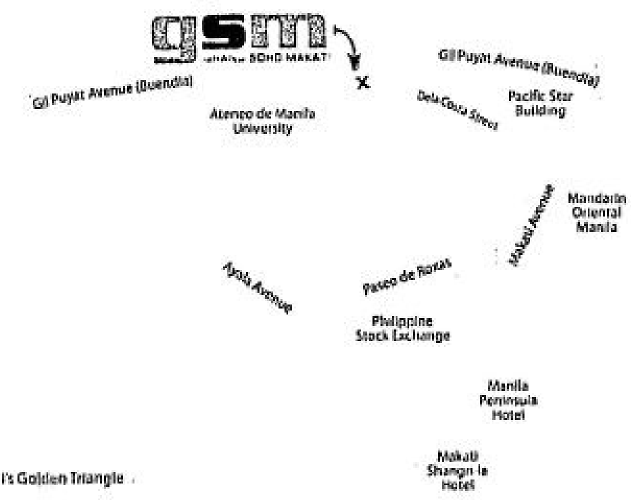
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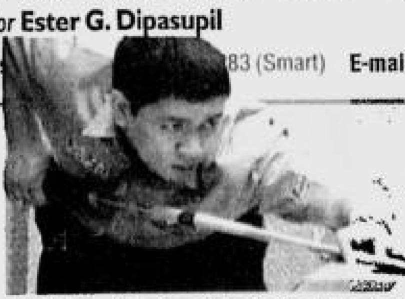


WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Manila bats for closure of billiard halls near schools /A22
■ Taguig teachers press for principal's ouster /A22
■ QC police van sprayed with bullets /A22

Coastal Road toll raised by 20% starting tomorrow

Pending petition at TRB also seeks SLEx fee hike

By Daxim L. Lucas

MOTORISTS USING THE COASTAL ROAD—the main artery between Metro Manila and Cavite—will have to pay a higher toll starting tomorrow.

"For class one vehicles, the toll fee will rise to P18 from the present P15," Toll Regulatory Board spokesperson Julius Corpuz said in an interview.

Class one vehicles include private cars, jeepneys, passenger vans, taxis and for-hire Asian utility vehicles commonly known as "FX".

Class two vehicles like passenger buses and mid-sized private vehicles will be charged P36 from the old rate of P30.

On the other hand, Class 3 vehicles composed mainly of large cargo trucks will have to pay P54 from the previous rate of P45.

Corpuz explained that the toll rate increase that would take effect tomorrow, June 15, should have been implemented on Jan. 1 this year.

"The TRB delayed the implementation out of consideration for the motoring public," he said, explaining that toll road regulators took into account the effects of the expanded value added tax implemented earlier this year as well as the series of fuel price hikes.

"It was deferred to April 1 but we delayed it further until after the school opening, considering all other factors," Corpuz said.

The TRB's approval of the 20 percent toll hike was part of the contractual agreement between the government and road builders to maintain a "reasonable" rate of return for project investors.

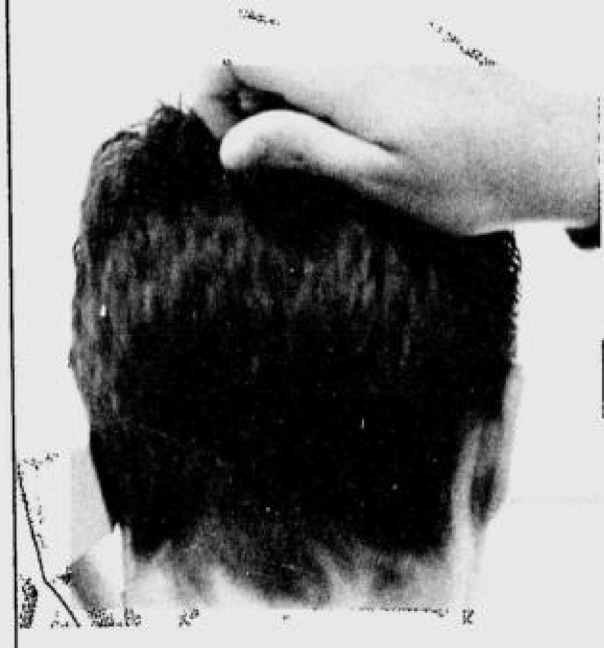
"This is a regularly scheduled toll increase for the Coastal Road, pursuant to our agreement with the Philippine Estates Authority and the UEM Mara Phils. Corp.," Corpuz added. The last toll rate increase for the Coastal Road was effected on Jan. 1, 2005.

An estimated 80,000 to 100,000 vehicles travel daily on the seven-kilometer stretch linking Cavite to Metro Manila. There are plans to extend the roadway by another eight kilometers to Kawit, Cavite.

Last April, the TRB also raised the toll rates for the Southern Tagalog Arterial Road (Star) from the town of Sto. Tomas to Lipa City in Batangas province.

Under the new rates, the toll for class one vehicles was hiked P23 from the old rate of P16. Class two vehicles, on the other hand, now pay P45 from the previous rate of P33 and class three vehicles, P68 from the old rate of P49.

There is also a petition pending at the TRB for an increase in toll rates at the Southern Luzon Expressway.



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FLOODS like these will no longer be a common sight in the Metro, according to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority. GABRIEL MISTRAL/GETTYIMAGES

MMDA expects fewer floods with intensified cleanup drive

By Tarra V. Quismundo

ROADS IN THE METROPOLIS ARE NOW less prone to floods, according to Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chair Bayani Fernando.

Fernando, in a recent phone interview with the INQUIRER, attributed the improved situation to the regular clearing of waterways, drainage systems and the MMDA's information campaign on proper garbage disposal.

He said the agency started conducting these operations when it was placed in charge of flood control in Metro Manila in 2002.

"Substantially, we have eliminated so much flooding. Of course, what we want is to have no more floods in Metro Manila, but it cannot happen completely because at times, just a piece of plastic blocking the drainage could cause floods," Fernando said.

Citing statistics, the MMDA chair said that a comparison of the flood situation in the metropolis in 2002 and in the past months showed an improvement in the flow of rainwater through the drainage systems, resulting in less floods. In 2002, four inches of rainfall would cause floods in 30 to 40 kilometers of roads. Today, the same amount of rainfall would only flood six to eight kilometers of roads, he added. Fernando said that in 2002, 2.35 inches of rainfall would render impassable to vehicles some 20 kilometers of roads in the metropolis. Right now, the same amount of rain would just submerge about one kilometer.

"That's because of our flood control operations, including cleanups of waterways and maintenance of drainage culverts. And that's also because of our program to spread awareness in communities about not throwing garbage into creeks," he added.

Fernando said regular maintenance and dredging operations, conducted with the help of local governments, have also minimized flooding in low-lying areas in the Metro. Among the critical areas are the Antipolo Creek and Estero de Pandacan in Manila, Estero de Tripa de Gallina in Pasay City, the San Juan River in Mandaluyong City, the Taguig-Pateros River, and the Navotas River in Malabon City.

Last month, the agency launched "Oplan Linis Sapa, Iwas Baha," aimed at intensifying the MMDA's ongoing flood control operations, and an awareness drive encouraging residents to practice proper garbage disposal.

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Game shops near schools face closure

By Tina G. Santos

AS CLASSES IN ALL LEVELS BEGAN YESTERDAY, Manila police authorities have also started monitoring all gaming establishments operating near public and private schools in the city.

Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong, Manila Police District director, said they would not only be keeping a close watch on billiard halls, network gaming shops, video arcade centers and Internet cafes located near schools.

"We would recommend to the Manila City government the closure of these establishments so as not to disturb or lure the students into cutting classes," Bulaong said in a statement.

Authorities said owners and operators of games arcades should stop admitting students during school hours, adding that the unregulated operation of video and computer game shops has raised some concern among parents.

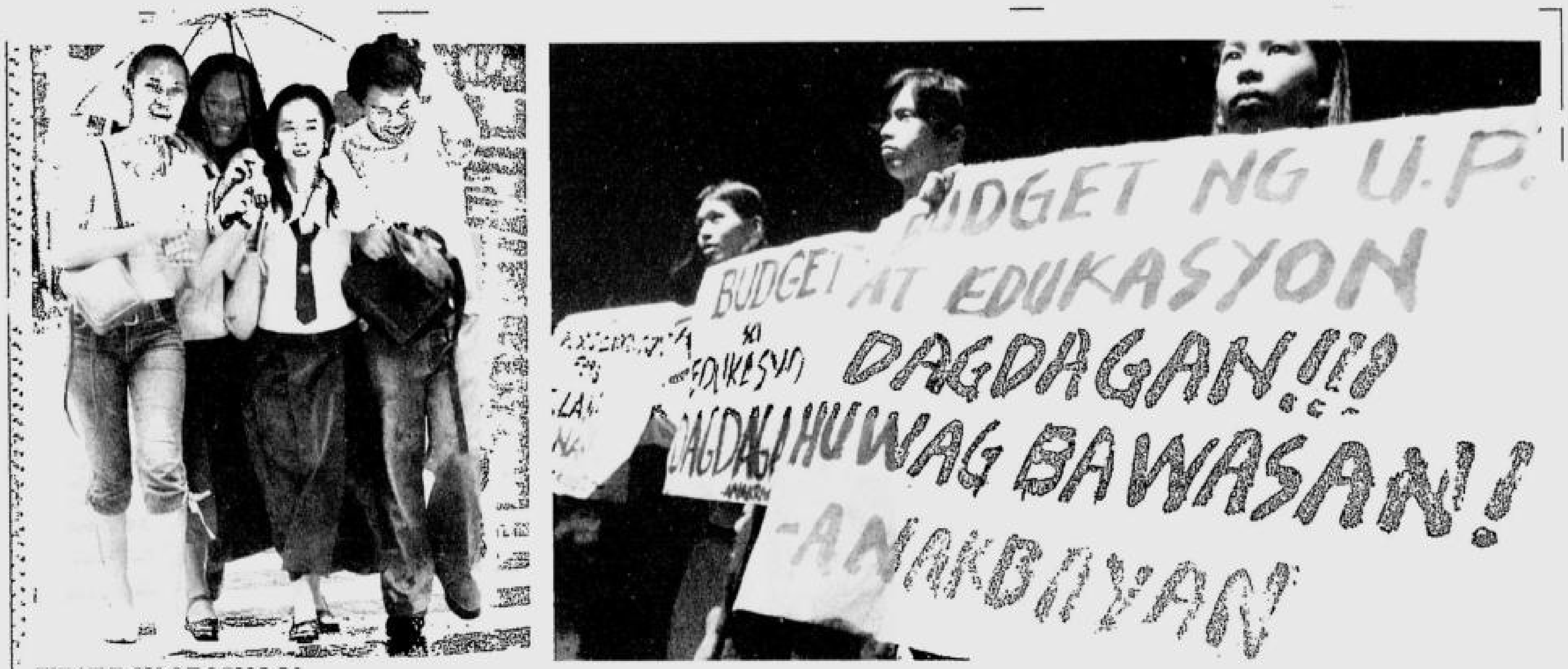
"While recognizing the rights of owners and operators of video and computer game shops to conduct business, their operations should be regulated, especially when it affects the welfare of the youth," Bulaong said.

Some concerned parents had earlier appealed to authorities not to allow these establishments to operate near schools.

Bulaong also met with officials and representatives of the Manila Association of School Security Officers to discuss safety measures for students as well as schools.

In addition, the MPD chief ordered the activation of the Youth Patrol Service under the office of the Women's and Children Desk. He also directed all police officers to conduct foot and mobile patrols within school zones to round up snatchers, holdup men, pickpockets and members of other crime syndicates.

All police stations were also told to monitor restaurants and bars situated near schools to see if the liquor ban on students is being strictly enforced in these establishments.


BUDGET NG U.P. AT EDUKASYON DAGDAGAN!!! HUWAG BAWASAN! -ANAKBAYAN

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
College students at the University Belt in Manila were all smiles despite the rains which fell on most parts of the metropolis. The mood was serious, however at the University of the Philippines where students protested the low budget given to education. REM ZAMORA

Tutors press for ouster of principal

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TEACHERS OF THE TAGUIG NATIONAL High School conducted a prayer vigil on Monday night to seek divine intervention in their campaign to oust their school principal.

The vigil, which was also attended by parents of some students, began at 6 p.m. and ended at midnight.

During the activity, the teachers reiterated their appeal to the Department of Education to replace Dr. Eleonor Abisado, whom they had accused of misappropriating school funds and lacking school management skills.

The principal, however, had described the allegations against her as "baseless" and "politically motivated."

Bernadette Bautista, president of the school faculty, said they feel that their appeal to the DepEd has fallen on deaf ears. "It has been a week since we requested the DepEd to replace Dr. Abisado, but nothing has happened," Bautista said. "We are hoping for a speedy resolution of this crisis."

She reported that the situation at the high school was "tense" yesterday because Abisado came to work accompanied by 10 "bodyguards."

Classes at the school were called off by Abisado on June 5 after some 100 teachers, students and their parents staged a protest to demand her ouster.

Students returned to their classrooms three days later after the DepEd asked Abisado to reopen the school.

METROBRIEFS

Policemen attacked

A ROWDY group of men on a drinking spree showered a police van with bullets early yesterday in Quezon City. None of the policemen were hurt but the back windshield of the van was shattered, investigators said. One of the suspects later stabbed dead Ruben Mariano, 54, a vendor whom they accused of tipping off the police about the incident, said PO2 Rogelio Basbas Jr. Investigation showed that the suspects were drinking beer at 12:30 a.m. in front of Mariano's house at 26 Presidential St., Batasan Hills, when one of them suddenly fired his gun into the air. Batasan Hills policemen aboard a mobile van, with body number QC-45, went to the scene but they were met with a volley of gunshots, prompting them to call in a Special Weapons and Tactics team, Basbas said. By the time the SWAT team arrived, the suspects had fled, police said. After a brief interview with witnesses, the policemen left the area. One of the suspects, identified only as "Apyong," then confronted Mariano, who had been seen talking to the policemen, Basbas said. The suspect then stabbed the victim and fled. Mariano was rushed to the East Avenue Medical Center, but he was pronounced dead on arrival. A certain Jaypee Plaza, believed to be one of the suspects, was later arrested by the policemen.

DJ Yap

One dead, 9 hurt in fire

A MAN was killed while nine persons, including a child, were injured after a two-story firecracker factory in Barangay Pagpos, Binangonan, Rizal burst into flames, triggering successive explosions at around 11 a.m. yesterday. Rizal police chief Freddie Panen said Rodelio Manamam, a factory worker, later died of his injuries while being treated in the hospital. Panen said the fire was caused by spontaneous combustion. The resulting explosion hurled debris outside the building, hitting passersby, including a child, who were taken to the hospital for treatment. Responding firefighters managed to put out the fire at 12:20 p.m.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

'Peaceful' eviction at Fort Bonifacio

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE EVICTION TEAM SENT TO FORT Bonifacio yesterday to move out some 41 retired and overstaying officers met no resistance yesterday since most of the officials had already moved out of their quarters.

As of press time, only five officers staying in the Junior Officers Quarters at the Bonifacio Naval Station (BNS) were still waiting for the Navy's M35 trucks to transport their belongings.

The rest had vacated their houses long before the seven-day eviction notice took effect yesterday. Thirteen officers even left before the eviction notice could be served.

"Of the three eviction sites, I would say this is the most peaceful. There was no incident whatsoever. They left voluntarily," said Navy spokesperson Capt. Geronimo Malabanan.

The Navy started last month to evict retired officers and soldiers from quarters meant for active-duty personnel.

On May 20, a task force composed of 2,000 men headed by Marine Lt. Col. Gioksan Dammang forcibly evicted 56 retired senior officers from the Senior Officers Quarters at the BNS.

The senior officers, who included former heads of the Navy and Marines, protested their eviction through threats and physical confrontation.

The task force, however, succeeded in getting them out of the quarters they had been occupying for years, some for over a decade.

Seventeen other retired senior officers were not evicted since they had earlier secured a court injunction.

On June 2, the same task force evicted 115 retired enlisted personnel from the Married Enlisted Quarters also at the BNS. The affected soldiers succeeded in getting a status quo order from the court but the Navy pushed through with the eviction.

One soldier tried to resist, but the rest eventually left. Seven other retired enlisted personnel were not evicted since they had also obtained a court injunction. Under military housing rules, an officer or soldier has 30 to 60 days upon retirement to vacate the quarters provided by the military.

Among those evicted yesterday from the Junior Officers Quarters were seven Philippine Coast Guard officers, five of whom are still on active duty.

Malabanan said the memorandum that allows Coast Guard officers to stay at the JOQ for five years expired on May 30, 1998. He added that the next eviction would be carried out in Camp Claudio, Parañaque, one of the Navy's off-base housing facilities in Metro Manila.

Camp Claudio has 165 homes for enlisted personnel, but only 126 occupants are authorized to stay in the area, Malabanan added.

Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network

INQUIRER TV GUIDE
Wednesday, June 14, 2006

American Idol

Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm

ABC Iba Tayo!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	The Best Of American Idol			
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr Bean	Naruto	Calla Lily	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Bituing Walang Ningning	Sa Piling Mo	My Girl	Wonderful Life	S.O.C.O.			Insider
AXN		CSI: Miami		CSI: NY (Season I)		Guinness World Records: 50 Yrs, 50 Records		Beastmaster (Season I)		Andromeda (Season V)		AXN Road Trip: FIFA World Cup 2006	Samsung Sports World	Maximum Exposure (Season I)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: Miami (Season II)	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy: Double Episodes		The Simpsons - Double Episodes		Power Rangers Ninja Storm	PokeMon	Dex	Gundam Seed Destiny	The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Kalabakaba Ka Ba?				Teenage Marriage				Diliryo			Persona	Problem Child (8:15 PM)				Diskarte	
Cinemax		Blind Date (Movie)			Curse Of The Werewolf				Love Walked In (6:25 PM)			Michael Collins				[illegible] Movie (10:10 PM)			
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Cold Case		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	I, Detective	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Romeo Must Die				Bones	
Discovery Channel		Unsolved History		American Chopper		Building The Ultimate		Dangerman: Adventures With Geoff Mackley		Wild Discovery		Hour China		Superweapons Of The Ancient World		I Survived		Ten Ways	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-[illegible] Bunny	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			American Dragon	Buzz on Maggie	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN				Sportscenter at the U.S. Open		NBA Finals								Sportscenter at the U.S. Open		Sportscenter Asia	NBA Finals		
ETC		America's Next Top Model 4		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Veronica Mars 2		Beach Girls		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Cold Turkey		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	St. Thomas More, Faithful Statesman	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Faith in Motion	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Suffering And The Love Of God	EWTN Catholic Classic	The Church & The Poor: Building Bridges	Mother Angelica Live Classics		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	One In Their Hearts: Holiness Of Priesthood	Parable	Rome Reports	Special Programming	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat (2:45 PM)	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Endless Love 1: Autumn In My Heart By Popular Demand		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusen	24 Oras		Captain Barbell	Majika	I Luv NY	Love Of The Condor Heroes	Jewel In The Palace		Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		Mcleod's Daughters V		Cupid & Cate (4:01 PM)				Bewitched	The Nanny	Judging Amy		Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye III		Judging Amy		Redwood Curtain			Judging Amy (11:45 PM)
HBO				Neil Simon's The Goodbye Girl			Perfect Romance				Beethoven's 2nd			Fahrenheit 9/11				The Bourne Supremacy	
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Angelic Layer	Tokyo Underground	Metal Fighter Miku	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mama de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Angelic Layer
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	TV Infomercial		Japan Video Topics/ [illegible]		ME TV		Travel Philippines	BYK 101	Up Close And Personal	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Heat		Velocity		X-Men	Street Smarts	Mad TV		That 70s Show	My Name Is Earl	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Premium Blend	Primetime Glick	Chappelle Show
Lifestyle Network		30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	Decorating Cents	Iron Chef America		My Country, My Kitchen	E! Entertainment Special		Living Space	Martha		Fine Living Special		Intimate Portrait	
MTV Philippines		Laguna Beach		MTV Screen	MTV Hits (with SMS)					Get Spotted	Get Hitch'd	MTV Screen	06 Movie Awards Nominated & Clipd	TRL		Laguna Beach		MTV Live Image	
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXLOG	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Live!		Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	National Geographic Specials		Journey into Amazonia		Totally Wild: Dealing Loadmaster	Planet Wild S1	Top 5 - Planet Football		WDW Wild Sex: Macho Males		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Seconds From Disaster: Collision on the Runway		Is it Real? Ghosts	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Asia	Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants/ Right On Top	My Life As A Teenage Robot	Nick Kicks		The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Abot Bahay Gang				Ibulong Ang Unang Bato				Bukas Luluhod Ang Mga Tala				Tunay Na [illegible] Wonder Woman				Sabado Nights
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Screened Pinoy	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Magic Ring	Irene	Noel	Project 11	Now Na!		News On Q	Balikbayan		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Aksyon News	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	NBA Series/Conference Finals						Newswatch Now	Cargo For Truth		Kerygma
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Sun Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports					Volleyball 2006 Montreux Volley Masters				NBA Jam	Sagupaan	2001 NBA Finals: Lakers vs West Games						Solar Sports Desk	World Tennis Masters ep 3	
Sports Plus				FIFA World Cup '06: Czech Republic vs. Togo						NASCAR: Pocono 500 Pocono									
Star Movies			Identity Theft (3:45 PM)			Big (5:15 PM)				City Slickers II: The Legend Of Curly's Gold				Species III			GoldenEye		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Beauty & The Geek		Beauty & Geek Boston Legal		The Apprentice		Seinfeld	Beauty & The Geek
Studio 23	Bewitched	YuGi-Oh 3 & 4				Batman Beyond	Xiaolin Showdown	Sports	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Videos		CSI (8:20 PM)	24 season 4 (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

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UN atomic agency meets on Iran nuclear crisis

VIENNA—THE UNITED STATES stepped up pressure on Iran to curb its nuclear program Monday as the UN atomic watchdog warned questions remained over Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

UN nuclear chief Mohamed ElBaradei opened the meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency saying a more than three-year IAEA probe had failed to resolve "verification issues" over Iran's nuclear work.

"I would continue to urge Iran to provide the cooperation needed to resolve these issues," ElBaradei said.

Despite being unable to certify Iran is not seeking nuclear arms, ElBaradei said he remained "convinced that the way forward lies through dialogue and mutual accommodation among all concerned parties."

Gregory Schulte, the US ambassador to the IAEA, pressed Iran to honor international requests to suspend uranium enrichment, which can make fuel for nuclear power reactors or the raw material for atom bombs.

Tehran should "take advantage of the enormous diplomatic opportunity that lays in front of the Islamic Republic," he said.

Six world powers—the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China—last week offered Iran a package of incentives in return for reining in its program.

Suspending uranium enrichment was the pre-condition for talks on the benefits package.

The powers threatened UN sanctions if Tehran fails to comply.

But Iran seemed resolute.

"Iran has achieved nuclear fuel technology. This is our absolute right, and we will not negotiate our absolute right with anyone," Iranian government spokespersonn Gholam Hossein Elham told reporters in Tehran.

Iran says it has a mandate to enrich uranium under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as it only wants to use it to make fuel for power generation.

A vigorous debate on Iran but no resolution is expected at this week's IAEA meeting of its 35-nation board of governors, with the Iranian issue expected to come up Wednesday or Thursday.

In London, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert backed efforts to end the standoff with Iran.

"This is not an Israeli problem. It's a problem of every nation in the world," the prime minister said after talks with his British counterpart Tony Blair in London.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal arrived in Tehran on Monday, saying he hoped for a speedy resolution to the crisis.

But the United States faced an 11th hour hurdle in its efforts to ramp up pressure on Tehran.

Diplomats said Washington was fighting to prevent non-aligned states on the IAEA board from issuing a statement supporting Iran's right to uranium enrichment.

Washington feared this would ease up the carefully orchestrated pressure on the Iranians, they said. *AFP*

Witnesses recant pro-Saddam testimony, admit to bribery

BAGHDAD—FOUR DEFENSE witnesses in the trial of Saddam Hussein on Monday recanted their testimonies, saying they were coerced into speaking on behalf of the Iraqi ex-president.

Two of the witnesses said they were offered money for their testimony and two said their families had been threatened, according to confessions that were read out in court.

"My family is detained in Syria until I provided my testimony in defense of Saddam," said the confession of the first witness.

"I had to say I received $500 from (chief prosecutor Jaafar) al-Mussawi, in order to divert the attention of the world away from the Dujail case."

The confession of the second witness also indicated that he testified under threats to his family, but the final two witnesses admitted they did it for money, also $500.

"Khalil Dulaimi promised me he would get me appointments with (Saddam's daughter) Raghed and (wife) Sajida," said the confession, referring to Saddam's lead defense attorney. "Then my fortune would be assured and I would get residency outside Iraq."

For all the recanting witnesses, the deals were organized by Saddam's former bodyguards with the final coaching on their court testimony performed by Dulaimi, according to the confessions.

The witnesses testified two weeks ago that they had seen the chief prosecutor in Dujail in 2004 offering bribes for people to testify against Saddam and that many of the supposed victims in the case were actually still alive.

Saddam and seven co-defendants are on trial for crimes against humanity involving the arrest, torture and execution of 148 Shiites from Dujail in the early 1980s following an attempt on Saddam's life.

Following their testimonies, the four witnesses were detained by the court, which was pursuing legal action against the witnesses, the judge said. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

N. Korea readies missile test

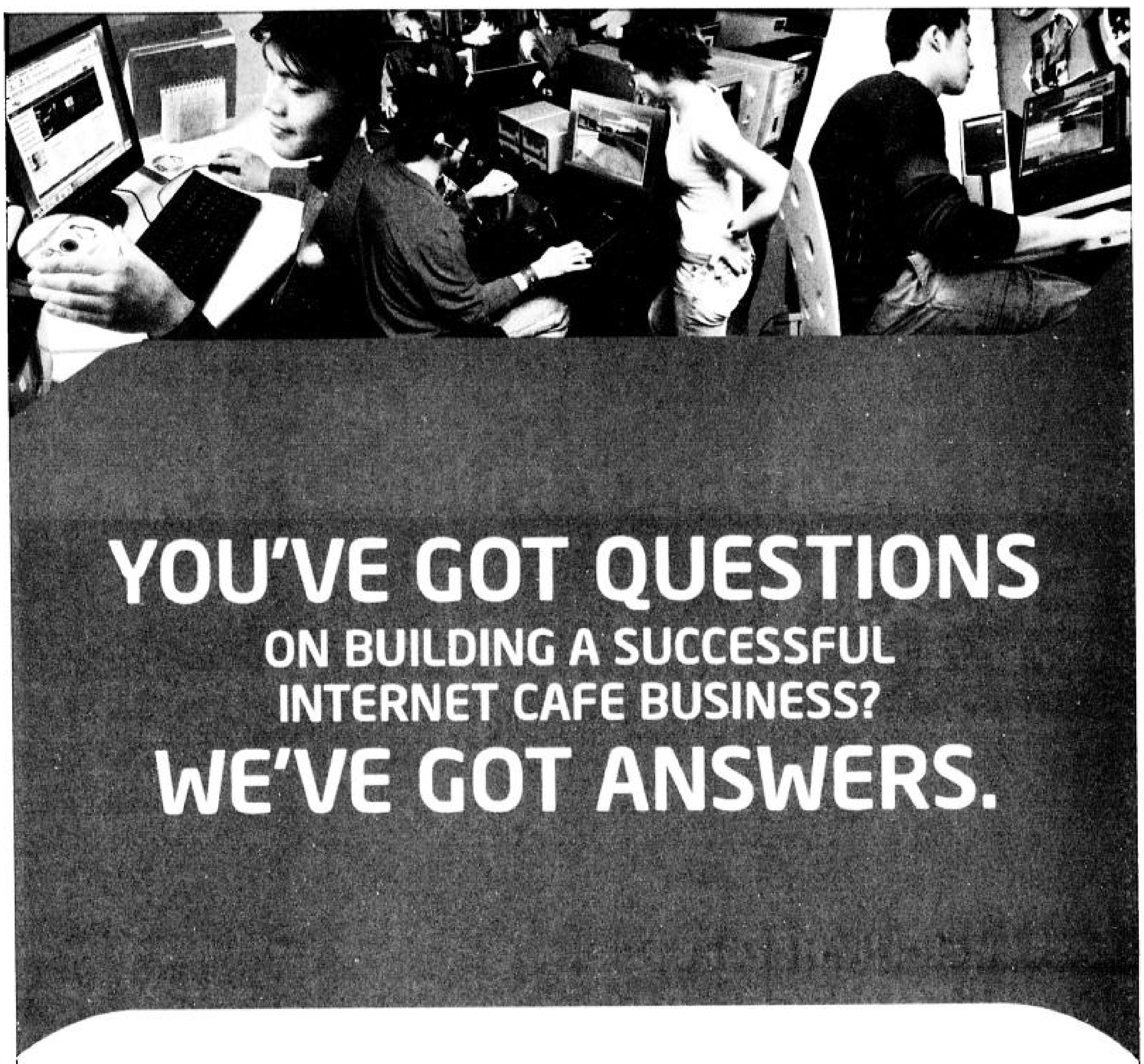
WASHINGTON—North Korea is making plans to test an intercontinental ballistic missile that could reach the United States and the launch could come soon, US officials said on Monday. One official told Reuters there was some debate over whether Pyongyang would follow through on the preparations with an actual test but a second official said a launch could happen within weeks. Japanese media have reported there have been signs of North Korea making preparations to test a multiple-stage Taepodong 2 missile since early May. It would be Pyongyang's first test of a long-range missile since it stunned the world in August 1998 by firing a Taepodong over Japan that landed in the Pacific Ocean. Washington is discussing how it would respond to a test, and the United States and Japan have moved "assets" into position to monitor and collect data on any launch, US officials said. *Reuters*

Nearly 40 Taliban killed in Afghanistan

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan—Major strikes by Afghan and coalition troops killed up to 37 Taliban fighters, including a man believed to be related to the movement's leader, the military said Monday. Two Afghan civilians were also killed and nine others including two children were wounded in a bomb attack Monday in southeastern Paktia province in an attack that bore the hallmarks of Taliban insurgents. Fifteen of the militants were killed when Afghan security forces backed by the US-led coalition attacked their hideout in the southern province of Uruzgan on Sunday, Gen. Rahmatullah Raufi said. The dead included a man "most likely" to be a brother-in-law of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, Raufi said. "Among the dead whose bodies were left on the battlefield there is one guy called Amanullah who is most likely to be Mullah Omar's brother-in-law and was in charge of the Taliban's finances in the province," he said. *AFP*

Motion to be filed to oust Taiwan president

TAIPEI—A special session of Taiwan's parliament convenes on Tuesday for the opposition to present a motion to oust President Chen Shui-bian, turning up the heat over a series of scandals involving his family and former aides. The motion is unlikely to pass, analysts say, because the opposition—led by the Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang—lacks the two-thirds required to push it through, despite a slim majority in parliament. Nevertheless, it deepens a political crisis that has pushed Chen's public approval ratings to record lows. Opposition lawmakers hope the so-called recall motion will lead to the emergence of evidence of wrongdoing and stiffen anti-Chen sentiment among the public. Once it is formally presented, Chen has seven days in which he can respond in writing to the motion, which—if passed—would authorize a referendum on whether he should step down. *Reuters*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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Iraq's al-Qaida names Zarqawi's successor

Beheadings, suicide bombings to continue

BAGHDAD—AL-QAIDA IN IRAQ SAID ITS NEW leader named on Monday would keep up a campaign of beheadings and suicide bombings begun by the Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was killed by US bombs last week.

The warning came on a day when violence, including two car bombs, killed at least 34 people.

In the worst attack, a bomb killed at least 10 people at a market in the upscale Mansour district of western Baghdad.

"The shura council of al-Qaida in Iraq unanimously agreed on Sheikh Abu Hamza al-Muhajir to be a successor to Sheikh Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," said a statement signed by al-Qaida and posted on a website frequently used by Islamist militants.

"Sheikh Abu Hamza al-Muhajir is a good brother, has a history in jihad and is knowledgeable. We ask God that he ... continue what Sheikh Abu Musab began," it said.

But US President George W. Bush immediately said Zarqawi's successor would be in US sights, signaling the US military would keep targeting insurgent leaders.

Bush was speaking to reporters after convening high-level consultations at the Camp David presidential retreat hoping to capitalize on Zarqawi's death. "I think the successor to Zarqawi is going to be on our list to bring to justice," he said.

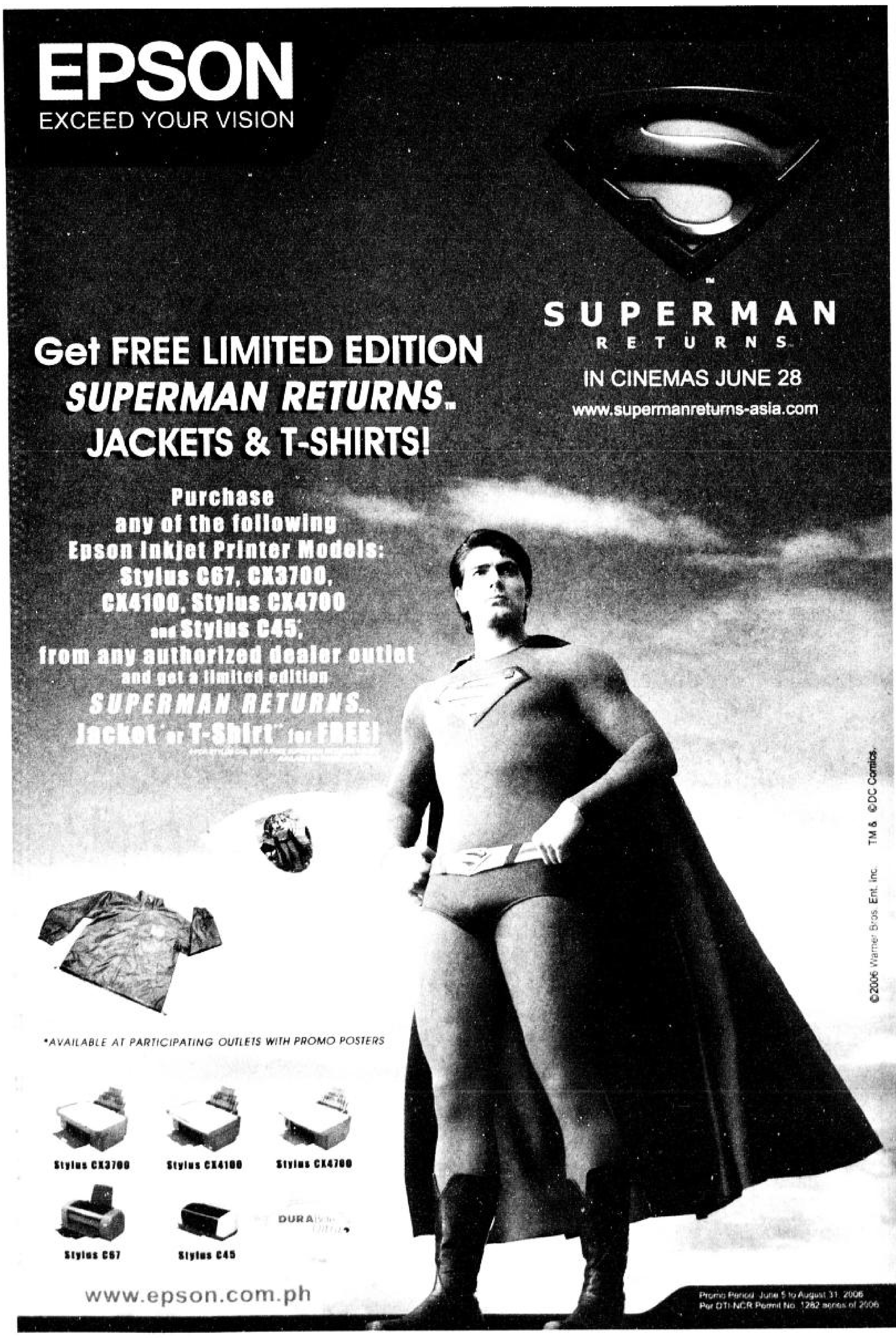
Muhajir was not among the names al-Qaida experts had expected to succeed Zarqawi, a Sunni militant who US and Iraqi officials said was seeking to spark a sectarian civil war.

Al-Qaida expert Fares bin Houzam said Muhajir could be a pseudonym for Egyptian militant Abu Ayyub al-Masri, who US officials have said could succeed Zarqawi, or Saudi-born Sheikh Abu Hafs al-Qarni, whom al-Qaida named as Zarqawi's deputy last year in an Internet statement later retracted.

Al-Qaida makes up just 5 percent of the Sunni Arab insurgency but its fighters have mounted the most spectacular violence, sometimes killing over 100 people in a single attack.

Although US and Iraqi leaders have hailed Zarqawi's death in an American air strike as a major blow against al-Qaida, no one has suggested the 500-pound bombs that ended his life would halt the violence ravaging Iraq. *Reuters*

LONGEST REIGNING MONARCH
A view of the Ananda Samakhom Throne Hall as kings and queens, sultans and princes from 25 countries along with Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit pose for a group photograph in Bangkok, June 12. AFP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Suicides fuel more calls for Guantanamo's closure

WASHINGTON—THREE SUICIDES by Guantanamo prisoners were more proof the US camp should be closed, critics said on Monday, and the Bush administration went into damage control over an official's comment that the deaths were a "good PR move."

Two Saudis and a Yemeni hanged themselves with clothes and bedsheets in their cells on Saturday, the first prisoners to die at Guantanamo since the United States began sending suspected al-Qaida and Taliban captives there in 2002.

"Guantanamo should be closed. This is an occasion to reiterate that statement," EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner told reporters on arrival at a meeting of the bloc's foreign ministers in Luxembourg.

Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik, whose country holds the EU presidency, said the 25-nation bloc would raise the issue at a summit with US President George W. Bush in Vienna next week.

Last month, Plassnik said Guantanamo was "an anomaly" and should be shut down as quickly as possible. The European Parliament has called for the camp's closure.

Already struggling to improve its image abroad, the United States distanced itself on Monday from comments by an administration official that were widely seen as insensitive.

Deputy assistant secretary of state for public diplomacy Colleen Graffy said on Sunday that the suicides were "a good PR move."

"I would just point out in public that we do not see it (the suicides) as a PR stunt," Department of State spokesperson Sean McCormack told reporters.

There have been many previous suicide attempts at Guantanamo, where the US military holds 460 foreigners captured mainly in Afghanistan during the US-led war there to oust the Taliban and al-Qaida after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Before Saturday, 23 prisoners had tried to kill themselves in 41 suicide attempts at the camp.

Saudi Arabia's Interior Ministry identified the two Saudis as Manei al-Otaibi and Yasser al-Zahrani but gave no further details. Pentagon documents show Zahrani was 21, meaning he was sent to Guantanamo as a teenager.

The US military identified the Yemeni as Ali Abdullah Ahmed and described all three as "dangerous enemy combatants." *Reuters*

Gunmen set Palestinian PM office, parliament on fire

RAMALLAH, WEST BANK—GUNMEN set fire to the Palestinian prime minister's office and parliament on Monday as fighting escalated between followers of the ruling Hamas militant group and President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement.

In the latest sign of a deepening political crisis in the Palestinian territories, Abbas ordered security forces to take control of the streets in the wake of the clashes and vandalism.

Hamas and Abbas have been locked in an intensifying power struggle since the Islamists took over the government in March after trouncing Fatah in parliamentary elections.

Witnesses said the Ramallah office of Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, a senior Hamas leader, was empty when gunmen from the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, part of Fatah, entered.

Haniyeh is based in Gaza, the militant group's stronghold, and does not have access to the city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank because of Israeli curbs on travel by Hamas members.

The gunmen burned an upper floor of the multi-story building and tossed furniture out the windows before police arrived and removed them. They also set fire to parliament in Ramallah after repeatedly firing into the building.

Fire engines rushed to both scenes to douse the flames as gunfire echoed around the streets, witnesses said.

Masked gunmen also kidnapped a Hamas legislator in Ramallah before releasing him soon after, a Palestinian official said.

Several other Hamas lawmakers in Ramallah, fearing for their safety, took refuge in Abbas' compound, he added.

At the core of the current tension is a referendum Abbas has called for July 26 on a manifesto for Palestinian statehood that implicitly recognizes Israel. Hamas, which seeks to destroy the Jewish state, has labelled the referendum a coup attempt.

Hussein el-Sheikh, a Fatah official, blamed earlier attacks by Hamas gunmen on forces loyal to Abbas in the southern Gaza town of Rafah for the West Bank violence. *Reuters*

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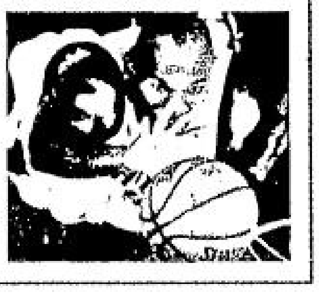

SPORTS

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Casio sparks Toyota Otis

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE GAME, LATE IN THE THIRD QUARTER, was slowly slipping from the grasp of the Toyota Otis Sparks. That was when JV Casio decided to take matters in his own hands and put his team within threshold of the PBL Unity Cup title.

Casio waxed hot from beyond the arc late in the third quarter, greasing Toyota Otis' path to an 83-80 victory over Harbour Centre and a pivotal 2-1 lead in the best-of-five series yesterday at the Olivarez Sports Center in Parañaque.

Casio came off the bench to bury 15 of his 21 points from the three-point area and lead four Sparks in double figures.

"The bench decided the game for us," said Sparks coach Louie Alas. "Casio played well even in practice yesterday . He shot 10 three-pointers and missed only two."

GAME TOMORROW (*Olivarez Sports Center*)
3 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs Toyota Otis

Alas also commended forward Ardy Larong, who shot nine of his 13 points in the final period.

The Sparks also spoiled the efforts of Harbour Centre's Joseph Yeo, who finished with a game-high 28 points, and LA Tenorio, who had 19.

The Sparks took a 10-point lead at intermission but quickly saw their 40-30 advantage diminish to a point, 40-39, when Yeo and Tenorio opened the second half with a 9-0 tear.

With the Portmasters wresting both momentum and control, pushing the Sparks behind at 48-53, Casio fired three straight triples that gave Toyota a 57-53 lead and his teammates the belief that they could pull this one out.

Earlier, the league honored Rain or Shine, formerly Welcoat, for its outstanding 10-year stint.

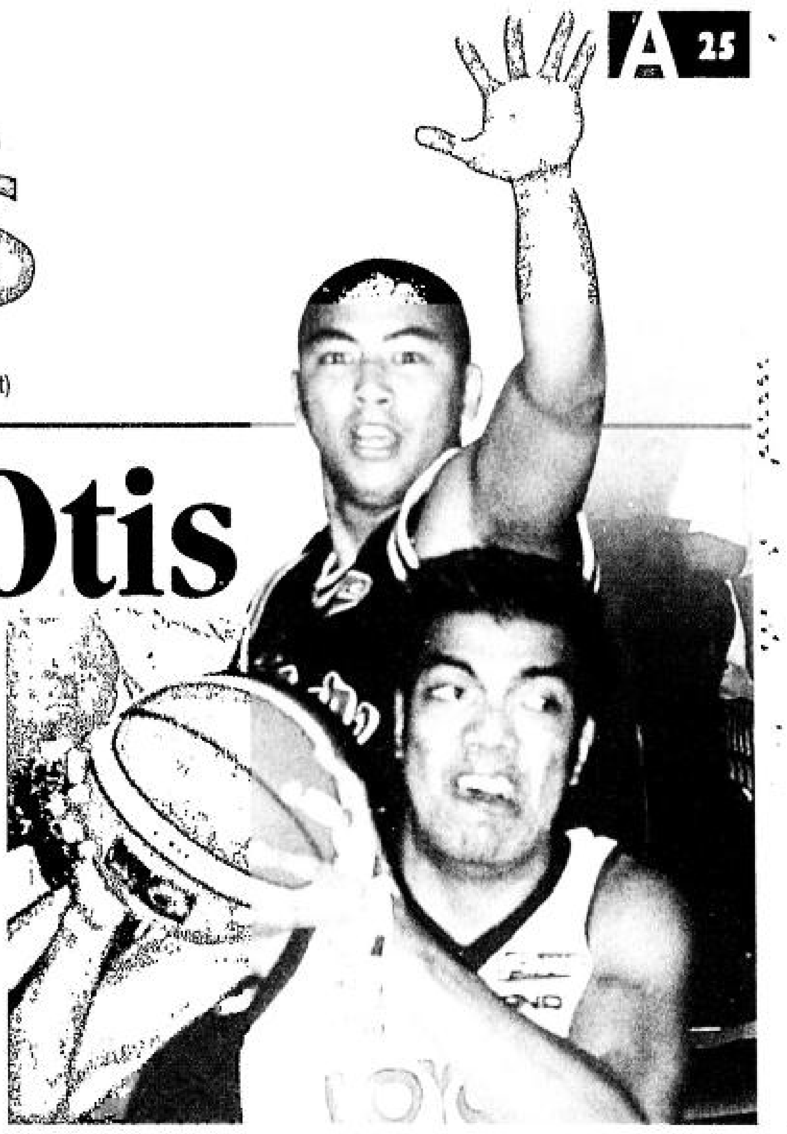
Former players Romel Adducul, James Yap, Marc Pingris, Yancy de Ocampo, Ronald Tubid, Don Allado, Denok Miranda, Mark Isip, Estong Ballesteros and Ato Morano graced the tribute for the franchise, which will debut in the Philippine Basketball Association this October.

The scores:

TOYOTA OTIS 83—Casio 21, Larong 13, Andaya 10, Daa 10, Aban 9, Devance 8, Coronel 8, Aldave 2, Bautista 2, Fajardo 0, Alcaraz 0, Rodriguez 0, Oreta 0.

HARBOUR CENTRE 80—Yeo 28, Tenorio 19, Reyes 9, Maierhofer 7, Alonzo 7, Chia 4, Gaco 4, Gamboa 2, Lanete 0, Dy 0, Coching 0.

Quarters: 15-19, 40-30, 58-55, 83-80



MARK Andaya of Toyota Oyis is a picture of grit as he drives against Allan Gamboa of Harbour Centre.
ERIK ARAZAS

Clutario rolls perfect game in PBC Open

CLUTARIO: Third career 300.

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LIZA CLUTARIO BECAME THE first female player to roll a perfect game in the 35th PBC-Boysen International Open Tenpin Bowling Championships at the Green Valley Monday night.

The 27-year-old Clutario completed her 300 in the first game of her doubles series with 2004 ABF Tour Philippine leg winner Irene Benitez to finish with 514. Benitez had 379 as they wound up with 893 pinfalls.

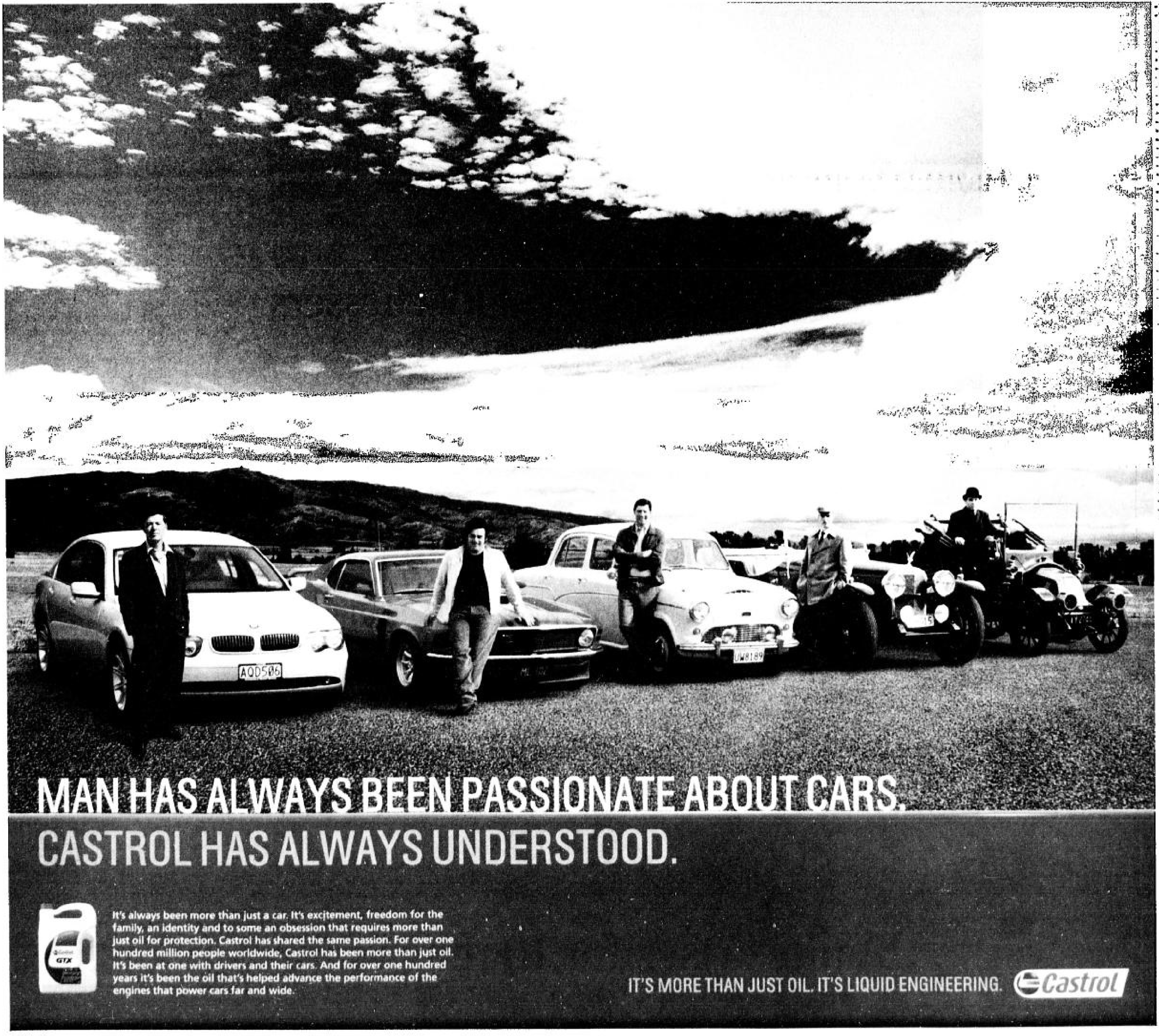
Using a Storm Agent ball which was drilled only three days ago, Clutario was just aiming for a five-bagger and a good block.

"It was really given to me I think because my thumb often stuck to the hole," said Clutario of her third perfect game. "Fortunately I had cherry the rest of the way especially in the last frame."

In fairness, she hit pocket in all the 12 frames—the ball hitting 1-3 pins first as it struck—with her graceful swing and rhythm. And if the thumb ever stuck, it hardly showed as she rolled away seemingly pressure-free, sending pins tumbling down the backwall every time.

Clutario, who works at the Bowlmart shop in Greenhills, personally drilled her ball, which eventually brought her luck. She first had a perfect 300 in Singapore in 2002 and another at a local competition two years ago.

The effort, though, wasn't enough to dislodge Southeast Asian Games champ Jojo Cañare and Elaine Florencio from the pole position in the Ladies Class O doubles after they posted 934.



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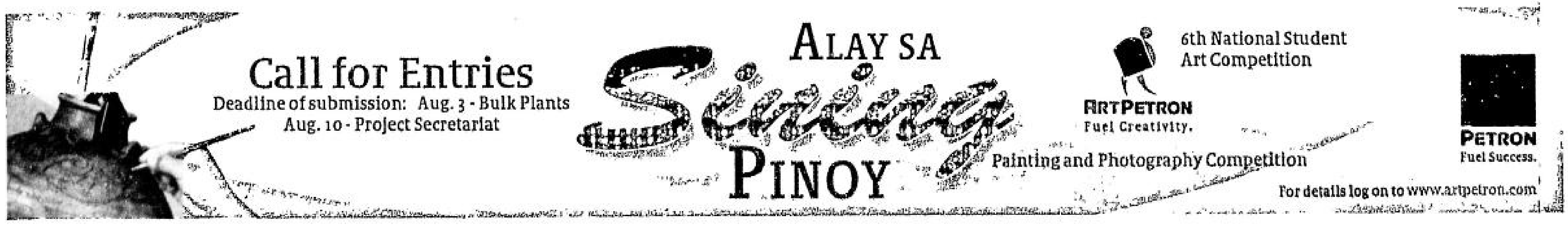

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NBC tourney: Warriors oust Crusaders

ILIGAN CITY—THE ILOILO WARriors posted the biggest reversal yet in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship Monday by ousting the Firefly Lightings-backed Iligan Crusaders, 81-74, before a stunned crowd at the MSU-IIT gym here.

With the win, the Warriors of the Iloilo Basketball League supported by Toyota-Iloilo and Mayor Jerry Trenas barged into the south division semifinals.

"I just know we could pull it off," said Iloilo coach John Trumpeta. "We came into this game believing we can win on the road. I hope we can keep the momentum into the next round."

The Warriors, who dropped three straight games before meeting the Crusaders and finished last in the south at 3-8, next play the second-seeded Pagadian Explorers in a best-of-three semifinal series.

Beaten 78-86 by Mayor Lawrence Cruz's Crusaders in the classification round, the Warriors put up a stiff defense to limit Iligan to eight points in the final quarter.

Not even the partisan fans could pump life to the Crusaders, who shot 24-for-76 from the field for a woeful 32 percent.

In contrast, the Warriors made 32 of 72 attempts for a 45 percent clip.

Former West Negros College Mustang Ruel Balgos lifted Iloilo to victory. The 6-foot-5 beanpole fired 17 points, grabbed 17 rebounds and has three blocks. Ex-FEU Tamaraw Rhagnee Singco chipped in 21 points, six rebounds, three assists and two steals.

Ollan Omiping paced the Crusaders with 16 points while Marlon Kalaw and Derrick Hubalde shot 13 each. But last year's MVP Christian Nicdao and frontline partners Ronnie Matias and Melvin Taguines combined for only 20 markers.

Playoff action of the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel continues tomorrow. It will be Valencia against North Cotabato in the south and Pangasinan Hundred Islands against Forward Taguig and Laguna-Sta. Rosa against Bacchus/Harbour Centre in the north.

The scores:

ILOILO 81—Singco 21, Balgos 17, Senierez 12, Sanz 10, Bautista 7, Leonida 6, Sencil 5, Unarce 3, Sina-on 0, Poral 0.

ILIGAN 74—Omiping 16, Kalaw 13, Hubalde 13, Nicdao 9, Matias 7, Sagad 5, Taguines 4, Tajonera 3, Ayodelle 2, Go 1, Canoy 0, Baguio 0, Ilagan 0, Espinosa 0.

Quarters: 26-25, 47-45, 65-66, 81-74.

Kings enjoy momentum; Aces wary of playoff jinx

FINDING ITSELF IN A SITUATION UNEXPECTED FOR A DEPLETED ROSTER, Barangay Ginebra tries to nail a semifinal seat when the Kings face Red Bull in Game 4 of the PBA Philippine Cup quarterfinals today at the Araneta Coliseum.

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:40 p.m.—Brgy. Ginebra vs Red Bull
7:35 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Alaska

The defending champion Kings grabbed a 2-1 edge in their best-of-five series with the Bulls and a victory will set them up in a semifinal showdown with the well-rested San Miguel Beermen.

But while the Kings enjoy psychological leverage over the Bulls, the Alaska Aces find themselves in a familiar role that has hounded them in the past. Twice had coach Tim Cone and the Aces lost a playoff series after winning the first two games.

They have the chance now to alter their fate. The Aces still possess a 2-1 lead in the series and can also wrap it up to arrange a best-of-seven semifinal duel with the top-seeded Purefoods Giants.

After gaining a 2-0 lead, the Aces curiously lost the 1990 Third Conference title and 2000 All-Filipino Cup to the Giants.

"I have high respect for coach Tim but I can't help but commend my team for doing a great job on Alaska defensively," said Coca-Cola coach Binky Favis.

"Considering the fast pace of the game, limiting them to a low-scoring game is a feat in itself."

That's what Favis intends to do, among others, when the Tigers try to even up matters and stretch the series to a deciding Game 5.

The Aces will again have to watch out for Ali Peek, who pulled the Tigers together when they came to the brink of crumbling. John Arigo and Dennis Miranda will also pose problems for the Aces.

On the Kings' end, coach Siot Tanquingcen will again have to squeeze the best from Mark Macapagal, Allan Salansang, Ervin Sotto and Egay Echavez to make up for his injured key players.

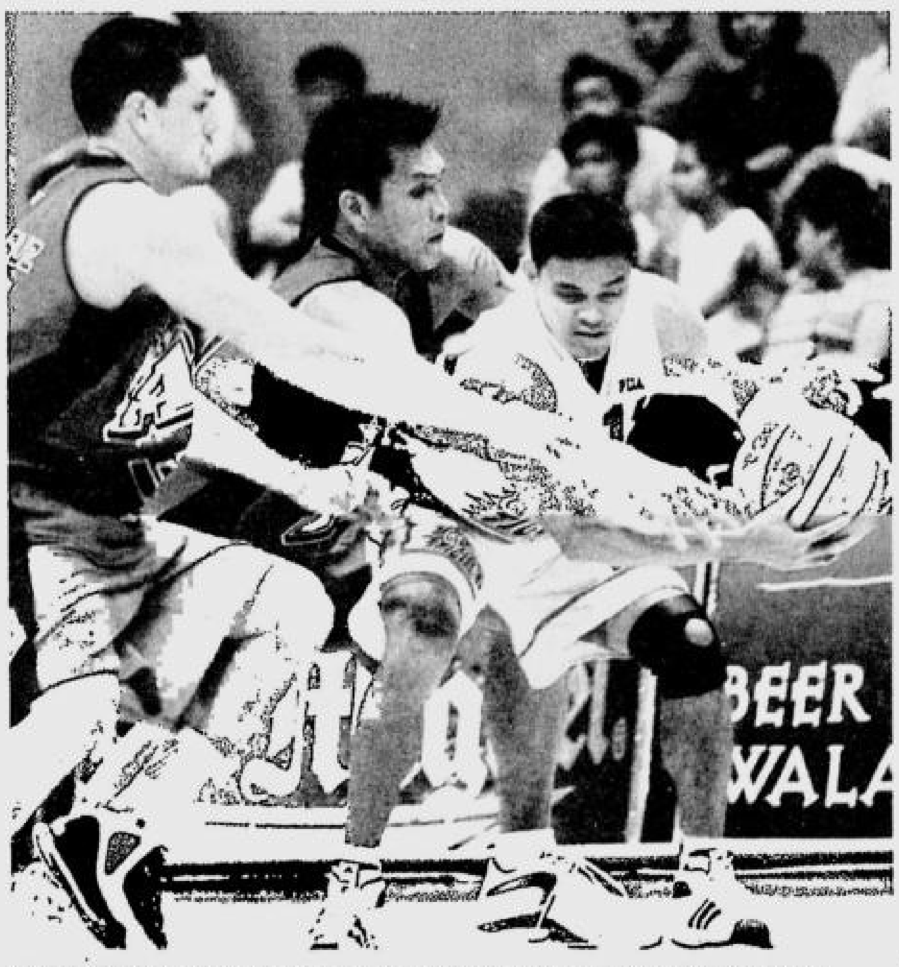
Jayjay Helterbrand and Andy Seigle are still uncertain coming into today's game while Rodney Santos, Rommel Adducul and Aris Dimaunahan continue to recover from an assortment of injuries.

"Game 4 is going to be another hard-fought game like Game 3," said Tanquingcen. "We can't take them lightly on Wednesday (today)."

With the crowd on their side, the Kings will also have to get a piece of the hustle statistics which the Bulls have dominated throughout the series.

Aside from forcing the Kings into costly turnovers, the Bulls possess the edge in steals, blocks and rebounding.

"It's no secret Red Bull paces the hustle stats. We'll just try to keep in step with them," said Tanquingcen. *June Navarro*



ALASKA'S Reynel Hugnatan and Tony dela Cruz harass Coca-Cola's Johnny Abarrientos (right).

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Eugene asks: Why me, dad?

In Huddle

Beth Celis

BECAUSE IT was the first time I got a close look at Purefoods Eugene Tejada, to me he appeared as healthy as any young cager still actively playing the game.

To his agent Bobby Rius though, the sight of Eugene after a month's confinement in the hospital, came as a big shock.

"He has lost so much weight. From the news items I've been reading on the Internet, I got the impression that Eugene was OK and well on the road today to full recovery. But now that I'm here, I've seen for myself that the boy is not OK," said Bobby, a close family friend from San Francisco who traveled thousands of miles to determine firsthand the true state of Eugene's health.

***

"What is the doctor's prognosis?" I asked Eugene's dad Danny, a varsity cager of San Beda in his younger days, in an effort to confirm Bobby's observation. Except for Danny, the rest of Eugene's family had gone back to San Francisco, where the cager's mother works as a nurse.

Danny heaved a long sigh.

"His doctor said he is young—only 25 years old—and that's one good thing going for him. He said rehab should start as soon as possible.

I Intend to take him back to San Francisco in two weeks so he could be close to his family while undergoing treatment."

"In the meantime, my son is paralyzed," Danny could hardly say the last word, without feeling intense pain. He was in a predicament absolutely no parent would want to be in, especially when his son asks, "Why me dad?"

***

For the firs time in a month, Eugene was allowed by his doctors to sit up in a chair. However, he could not stay in that position for long because he got very dizzy.

"The doctor said this is because he has been in a prone position for so long. But he has to get used to an upright position, otherwise how can he withstand the long flight from Manila to San Francisco," said the soft spoken Danny.

The curtains were drawn to allow light to filter in when we were ushered into Eugene's bedroom where his girlfriend Jenny Hernandez stood by his bedside.

According to Danny, Jenny has been constantly by Eugene's side since the accident, leaving only for important television tapings.

"She hasn't gone home once. She just instructs her maid or somebody from her house to bring fresh clothes and stuff to the hospital. I marvel at her devotion."

Jenny plans to follow Eugene to San Francisco.

* * *

"How are you?" Eugene greeted me. I had never met him before.

I threw the same question back at him. "How are you? You look healthy." I was being honest.

"Yes, I look healthy but I can't move my legs," he said. I could feel his depression.

His father Danny said there had been involuntary movements in his legs.

"But that's just about it. Involuntary movements. His mother and I don't care much if he ever gets to play again. What we're all praying for is that he be able to walk again," said Danny with a weary voice.

* * *

After 30 days in the hospital, Danny and Bobby estimate the bills to run about P10 million, an amount which will be shouldered entirely by Eugene's ballclub Purefoods Corp.

"The team has been very supportive. Mr. Rene Pardo (PBA board representative) is just great," Danny said.

Finally, the two questions everybody wanted to ask but never had the nerve or opportunity to do so: "Would it have made a difference if there was a properly equipped ambulance at Ynares Center and Eugene was rushed to the hospital earlier?"

"Definitely! Even 5 to 10 minutes would have made a difference, according to the doctors we have consulted. The swelling in the upper spinal cord would have been controlled had he been brought to the hospital earlier," Danny said.

If such is the case, does he intend to take any legal action?

Danny said he has one year to think about it. Eleven months to be exact, since it's been a month since the "Mother's Day" accident.

* * *

As I left Eugene's room at the ninth floor of the Makati Medical Center, my attention was caught by a long list of names posted by his door. The count went up to 13. Eugene was under the care of 13 physicians.

SY: On track for more victories

Garcia leads charge of RP chessers

WHIZ KID JAN EMMANUEL GARCIA beat Phyoe Aung Kyaw of Malaysia after 39 moves of a King's Indian Defense to lead the Philippine chess tea's charge in the second round of the 7th Asean Age-Group Chess Championships Tuesday at the Mercure Convention Center in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Garcia now has 2.0 points in the boy's 12-under and shares the lead with Dang Hong Son (Vietnam), Shanon Scot Neubroner (Singapore), Nicolas Rahman and Muhamad Satibi (Indonesia) in the event which attracted 350 participants.

The incoming Grade 6 pupil of San Beda College earlier beat Pei Jun Nicholas of Singapore after 41 moves of Sicilian Defense late Monday.

Also with perfect 2.0 points are Joel Pimentel of Bacolod City, Samantha Glo Revita (Girls U-8) of Rosales, Pangasinan and Chardine Cheradee Camacho of Caba, La Union, who hurdled their respective matches.

Pimentel demolished Ahmad Noordin Azni of Malaysia and Chon Zhong Amos of Singapore, respectively, to pace the boy's 14 and under while Revita beat Bui Ngoc Ahn Thi of Vietnam and Agustin Putri of Indonesia to head the girl's 10 and under. Camacho, a former Singapore Asean gold medalist, nipped Mai Thuy Trang of Vietnam and Dyah Rahmawati of Indonesia to lead the girl's 12 and under.

Melwyn Kenneth Baltazar (B U-10) of Malabon City, Paulo James Florendo (B U-18) of Zamboanga City, Mira Mirano (B U-10) of Banga, Aklan, Kimberly Jane Cunanan (G U-16) of Angeles City, Pampanga, tallied 1.5 points in two outings.

Another RP sweep looms in AF3 races

ANOTHER FILIPINO SWEEP IS LIKELY TO occur in the next three rounds of the Asian Formula Three Series in Guangdong, China, on June 17-18.

This was the bold prediction made by AF3 chair Ed Pena in yesterday's PSA Forum at the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila.

"I expect them (Filipino riders) to dominate the coming races," said Pena, referring to top RP drivers Tyson Sy and Dado Pena who will again lead the country's contingent in rounds 4-6 of the Asian-hopping circuit.

The 18-year-old Sy of Speedtech Asia swept the opening three races of the series at the Batangas Racing Circuit last month and leads the chase for the driver's championship with 60 points. Pena, of Team Goddard, is running fifth with 22 points.

The two young Filipino stars and the rest of the RP team left for Guangdong yesterday, raring to test their Dallara 304 cars in practice runs set on Thursday and Friday at the 4.3-kilometer Zhuhai International Circuit. The race for pole position will be held Saturday morning, with Round 4 set in the afternoon.

In the absence of former champions Ananda Mikola of Indonesia and Christian Jones of Australia Pena said Briton James Winslow of JA Motorsports and teammate Dillon Battistini should give Sy and Pena a run for their money. "But I will be surprised if our drivers don't finish 1-2," Pena added.

Monitor the races by logging on to www.asianf3.net and www.pldtmypad.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Empire Lady (5), Wynong Baidan (2), Blue Bolero (4), Ikaw Pag-Asa Ko (3)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Invictus (4), Black Pearl (10) Humble Guest (1), Thereshope (7), See Star (8)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—At All Cost (2), Golden Lance (4), Bunker Buster (6), Yanong Pikit (1)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—He's A Balong (4), Ingay Ingay (3), Song Bird (8), Mesmerize (2), LetshaveapartyAngel Eyes (10)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—LadyTycoon (10), Best In Class (1), Cool Turner/Wakinyan (11), Gigil's Gold (3), Western Dancer (4)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Triz)—My Lady Hannah (11), Honores (6), Dynamic Jason/Il Amorous (1), Chicklet (3), Drink N Drink/Ninety Nine Cents (4)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Blitzkrieg (3), Remus (1), Ocean Cookie (10, Take A Strike (9), Classic Royale (7)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Look Of Love/Federal Court (12), Fortissimo (9), West N Wild (2), Kaligatan (4), Silver Cho Cho (1), Perfect Tima (10)

Guidicelli, Stockinger enter Rotax challenge

THE COUNTRY'S BEST karters like Matteo Guidicelli, Marlon Stockinger, Ivan Carapiet, Alessandra Madrigal, Indy Villalon and Marty Aguilar are vying for the Rotax Driver of the Year Award in the 2006 Rotax Invitational Challenge starting on Saturday at the Carmona Racing Circuit in Cavite.

The races are scheduled on June 17, July 16, July 29, Aug. 5 and 6 with an entry fee of P3,000 for each round.

More than P800,000 worth of cash prizes are at stake.

The event is sponsored by ING Banking, Pitts, Petron, Chicago City Day School, Ford Global CVity, Nissan Gallery and Klassic BMW. It also features a cadet 85 division.

"This series will be exciting for the karters because they can win prize money, which they can use for their professional races and at the same time a very good way of enhancing their skills," said event organizer Blue Reyna.

Registration is now going on. Call 891-5901 for more information.

Benitez rises for RP flag vs foreign karters

BENITEZ: Biggest victory

JAVI BENITEZ DELIVERED for the country when he captured the Junior ROK crown against more experienced foreigners recently in the second leg of the 2006 Asian Karting Open Championship at the Carmona Circuit Philippines.

It was the biggest karting victory for the young Benitez, who swept Saturday's three qualifying heats, since starting with the sport two years back. Benitez admits the help of his good friend John Alvarez of the Cebu Racing Group was a major factor in winning the crown.

The two set aside their rivalry in the said division in the name of national pride against Indonesian top gun Rio Haryanto and Thailand's Master Tenart Sathienthirakul.

"I managed to pull away because John (Alvarez) was distracting the foreign drivers," said Benitez, a sixth grader at Xavier School who's backed by Bingo Bonanza Corp., Henry Sy Jr. of SM companies and Willy Ocier of Pacific Online Systems Corp. and Belle Corp.

"We told ourselves that it doesn't matter who wins, what matters for us is giving glory to our country," Alvarez added.

Haryanto and Sathienthirakul only showed their true form on the final day as they wrested the 1-2 positions, respectively, in the morning prefinal heat and dominated the early stages of the final race just inches ahead of Benitez and Alvarez in the afternoon.

While the two were dicing for the pole, Benitez found the open door for a decisive dive to grab the lead on the sixth lap.

Benitez wrapped up the 18-lap race in 12:53.830, 2.307 seconds ahead of Haryanto. Alvarez took third place while Sathienthirakul settled for fourth.

CZECH Republic's Tomas Rosicky celebrates scoring his team's third goal against the US during their Group E World Cup 2006 soccer match in Gelsenkirchen. REUTERS

Czechs blank Americans

Italy, Australia post huge World Cup triumphs

BERLIN—THE CZECH REPUBLIC HAD THE BIGGEST WIN OF the World Cup so far, scoring three goals Monday to beat the United States, 3-0.

The three-goal margin of victory was the most in the 11 games played in Germany at this year's World Cup.

Earlier in the day, Australia orchestrated the latest comeback in the tournament, scoring three goals from the 84th minute to beat Japan, 3-1.

Italy had a chance to eclipse both of those marks later Monday, but the Azzurri were happy enough with a 2-0 win over Ghana in Hanover.

Andrea Pirlo scored Italy's first goal in the 39th minute with a 22-meter (yard) shot through a crowded penalty area into the bottom right corner.

Substitute Vincenzo Iaquinta added the second in the 83rd, taking advantage of a poor back-pass from Samuel Kuffour to his goalkeeper.

Ghana had a few scoring chances and showed itself worthy of playing in its first World Cup.

The Czechs, who lost to eventual champion Greece in the semifinals of the 2004 European Championship, got one goal from tall striker Jan Koller and two more from Tomas Rosicky in Gelsenkirchen.

It wasn't all good news for the Czechs, however, as Koller was taken off the field on a stretcher in the 43rd and replaced by Vratislav Lokvenc.

Koller, who returned only last month from knee surgery, headed a cross past United States goalkeeper Kasey Keller in the fifth minute for his 43rd goal in 69 international appearances, a Czech record. He was later taken to a hospital to be examined after being taken off the field, the Czech team said.

"Unfortunately his injury is quite serious," Czech Republic coach Karel Bruckner said.

Rosicky scored a soaring 25-meter (yard) shot in the 36th minute, and then added another in the 76th, getting past the United States defense off a through pass from Pavel Nedved and beating Keller on the breakaway.

United States captain Claudio Reyna came closest to scoring for the Americans, hitting the post in the 29th minute.

"You can't be hesitant. You have to be aggressive from the first minute," Reyna said. "There's no excuse. We have to come out fighting against Italy from the first minute."

Four years ago, the United States reached the quarterfinals after upsetting Portugal. *AP*

Ronaldinho vows to win with a smile

BERLIN—WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR Ronaldinho said Monday he was raring to go ahead of Brazil's World Cup opener Tuesday against Croatia in Berlin—but vowed the important thing was to win with a smile.

"That's the aim—things work out well for me if I am happy playing," the 26-year-old Barcelona star told reporters following a workout in the Olympic Stadium under the gaze of coach Carlos Alberto Parreira.

RONALDINHO: Except during freekicks. AP

According to the star, Parreira has given his playmaker the green light to play with his trademark smile on his face—with the exception of planning a freekick routine.

Then, he says, he must adopt a serious mien as "that shows my powers of concentration."

Ronaldinho, whose long-range freekick sank England in the 2002 quarterfinals, said he was sure that Brazil's much heralded attack of himself, Ronaldo, Adriano and Kaka, would fire on all cylinders once their tournament gets going.

"Brazil's four attackers will be well marked but I'm confident we'll be able to get round that," he said.

Parreira meanwhile said he's no killjoy but wants his creative genius to apply himself with the utmost dedication with a sixth title at stake.

"We had a conversation and I told him not to lose the happiness he has playing football. He is free to do what he wants with the ball," Parreira stressed.

Just not show that toothy grin until after his freekicks have found their target. *AFP*

Crouch: I'll be cautious

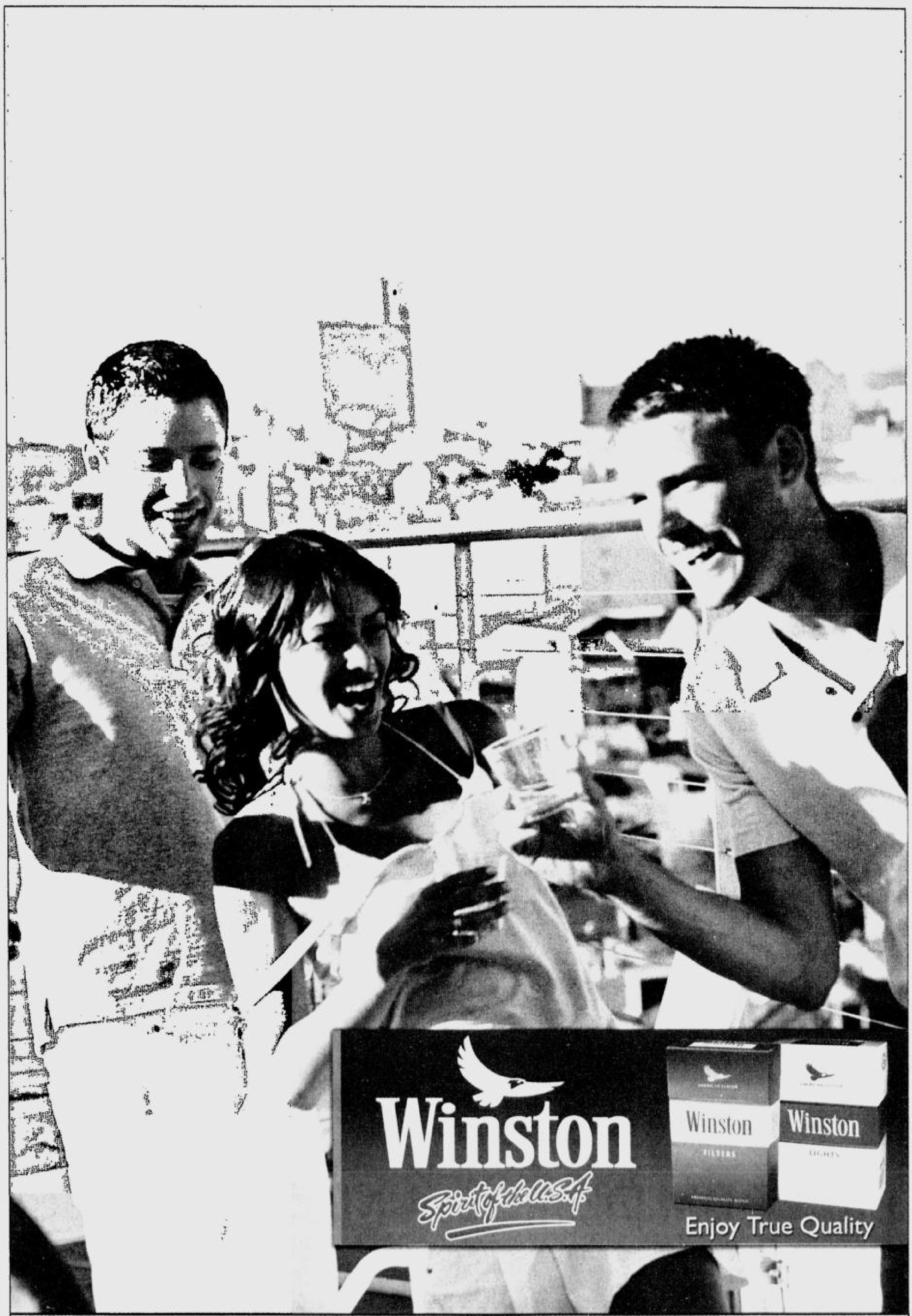
BADEN-BADEN, GERMANY—PETER CROUCH, as England's only fully fit, experienced striker, said Monday he's going to have to adapt his playing style against Trinidad and Tobago to avoid a second yellow card and a possible suspension.

Crouch was constantly penalized by referee Marco Rodriguez in England's 1-0 win over Paraguay on Saturday. He was shown a yellow for what was deemed persistent fouling.

ROONEY AFP

"It was frustrating," Crouch said Monday. "In the Premiership, I wouldn't get pulled up for half the things that I got pulled up for. But that's international football and you have to adapt to it and I'm sure I can."

Crouch is likely to start up front again on Thursday with Michael Owen, who lacked his usual sharpness against Paraguay—and Wayne Rooney is tipped to be a substitute against Trinidad and Tobago after England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson said he was "very optimistic" that the Manchester United striker would play. *AP*



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SPORTS

Viray braces for tough RP srs defense

By Musong R. Castillo

SILANG, CAVITE—ASIDE FROM THE COURSE, there's one other thing which Rolly Viray feels is different compared to last year when he won the Philippine Seniors Amateur Golf championship—his swing.

"There's something missing (in my swing), and I just can't explain it," Viray told the INQUIRER on the eve of the start of his title defense. "I had more confidence starting off last year compared to now, that's for sure."

The golf manager of Canlubang, Viray, who won this tournament last year in his very first season of eligibility, will be clashing with the same "old" foes over a tough Langer layout of The Riviera here, a venue which he said is in perfect shape to deflect low scores.

"There are no gimme holes in this course," said Viray, who is rushing to correct something in his takeaway. "One has to be in great shape to score—and win—over here."

Former winners Francis Gaston and Iggy Clavecilla and Philippine Sports Commissioner Richie Garcia head the list of players out to thwart a Viray repeat in the event being presented by Harbour Centre.

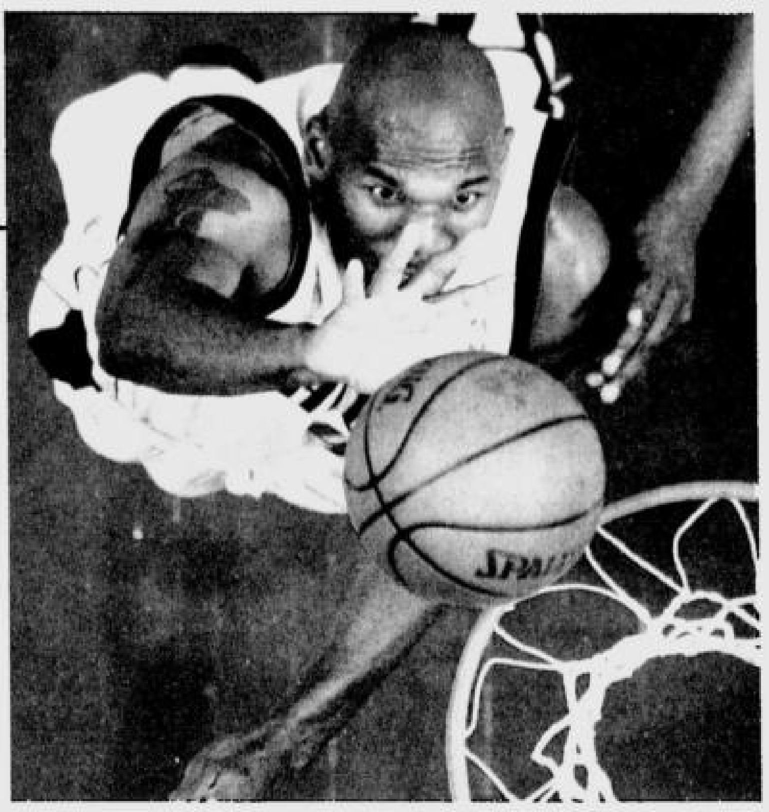
Former President Fidel V. Ramos, Harbour Centre chair Reghis Romero and NGAP president Leandro R. Mendoza will hit the ceremonial drives at 7:30 a.m. with honorary NGAP chair Rod Feliciano and vice president Danny Pizarro.

Clavecilla is the reigning Asia-Pacific seniors champion while Gaston shares a distinct record with Viray as former winners of the regular men's RP Amateur and the Seniors titles.

Caloy Coscoluella, Clifford Celdran, Edwin Arcilla, Bing Bunyi, Bryan Cockrell, Boni Sumbilla, Peregrin de Guzman, Antonio Olives, Rupert Bayocot, Pete Cervantes, Philip Judan, Jose Marie Lao, Jose Nepomuceno, Danilo Pizarro and Fernando Quing are the other notable entries in the Open division.

The top finishers in this category will earn slots to the RP team that will defend the Asia-Pacific Men's Seniors crown in November.

Last year's tournament was held at Malarayat in Lipa City.



JERRY Stackhouse: Vital cog for Mavericks' title aspirations. REUTERS

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Dragfest resumes Saturday

THE BATTLE FOR speed and pride heat up as more drivers try to beat the record time in the third leg of the 2006 Red Horse National Drag Racing Championship this Saturday at the Drag Strip of the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Registration is now ongoing. Participants may contact the Batangas Racing Circuit c/o BRC Operations Manager Rodini Rivera or Nelson Gayola at (632) 817-2241, 729-5365 or fax 815-1241.

Drivers intending to participate in the event sponsored by Red Horse Beer, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and supported by Pilipinas Shell, Denso, Yokohama, Casino Filipino and Sparco can test and tune up their cars on Friday at the venue for a fee of P500.

New driver Jonathan Tiu of Team ERE surprised everyone not just with his win in the last leg but also with his feat of setting a new track record of 11.309 aboard his Mitsubishi Evo5 in the premier Quick 8 division.

His achievement is an inspiration for new drivers who aspire to depose defending champion Leo Joel Cordero as Drag Racing Driver of the Year.

Mavs ready to strut stuff on the road

MIAMI—IF THINGS GO ACCORDING TO PLAN for the Mavericks, the next time they are in Dallas they'll be carrying a shiny gold trophy and getting ready for a parade.

The Mavericks left for Miami on Monday leading the NBA finals 2-0 over the Miami Heat and feeling pretty good about their chances of ending the series in Florida.

After all, they've done great on the road all season and postseason, and finals history shows they're now overwhelming favorites to become champions.

"The big thing for us is we know we're a good road team," veteran Darrell Armstrong said. "It's not cocky or anything. We just feel we can win on anybody's court."

The Mavericks have up to three tries in Miami to get the two wins needed to clinch the first championship in team history. Game 3 is on Tuesday, and Game 4 Thursday. If a Game 5 is necessary, it will be Sunday.

Among the things in their favor:

- Dallas had the third-best road record this season at 26-15, and is 6-3 on the road in the playoffs.

All three series-ending victories thus far have come on the road, including a dramatic Game 7 in San Antonio that went into overtime. The Mavericks are trying to join the 1999 Spurs and the 1989 Detroit Pistons as the only teams to clinch every series on the road since the postseason became four rounds in 1984, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

- NBA finals history is very kind to teams which take 2-0 leads. It's happened 27 times and 25 have ended up as champions.

Dallas is the 10th team to win the first two games at home since the league adopted the 2-3-2 format in 1985. The previous nine all won the title, including San Antonio last season.

Perhaps the best news for the Heat? Only twice has a team trailing 0-2 going into three straight home games ended up getting swept.

Miami also is 8-1 at home this postseason, with the lone loss way back on May 8, in Game 1 of a second-round series against New Jersey.

"There's no guarantee that that's going to make a difference, unless you really come and play," Heat coach Pat Riley said.

For a guy with a Superman tattoo who speaks about being from another planet, Shaquille O'Neal sure has looked like a mere mortal this series.

Coming off a career-playoff-low five points in Game 2, he's shooting 12.5 percent from the foul line, missing 14 of 16 attempts—and that doesn't include three misses nullified by lane violations. He has more missed free throws than rebounds (13). *AP*

SOLAR Sports will air Game 3 of the Dallas-Miami finals at 9 a.m. with a replay at 7:30 p.m. RPN-9 will also air Game 3 at 9 a.m. with a replay at 7 p.m.

Lady Archers eye No. 11

GAMES TODAY *(Blue Eagle Gym)*
12 nn—Adamson vs Lyceum
2 p.m.—FEU vs La Salle

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LA SALLE WILL AGAIN TRY TO expand its dominance as three other schools scramble for a shot in the championship today in the Shakey's V-League semifinals at the Blue Eagle Gym.

The Lady Archers have been denying the league its balance of power after winning their 10th straight match this conference alone. They again test their might against a brittle Far Eastern side at 2 p.m. with the Lady Tams hoping to get back from a two-game losing run.

La Salle will lean on its well-run system hinged on Thai import Jindarat Kanchana, who scattered 23 points when the Lady Archers turned back Adamson last Monday (23-25, 25-16, 25-11, 25-22).

The champions of the past two conferences, the Lady Archers are poised for yet another win here especially if they can get the same consistent performances from skipper Desiree Hernandez, Michelle Datuin, Manilla Santos and Reiea Saet.

Adamson will take on lowly Lyceum at lunchtime, trying to score a win that would move it back to second place with streaking San Sebastian.

Cherry Rose Macatangay, a 5-foot-11 beauty, will again be the focal point of Adamson which is now at third place with a 6-4 record. But she will need help from Rissa Jane Laguilles, Kristine Ann Dave and libero Donna Leil Adajar.

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Editor Emmie G. Velarde
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OPENING THIS WEEK

Kapag Tumibok ang Puso (Not Once But Twice)

Stars Bong Revilla, Ai-Ai de las Alas, Precious Lara Quigaman, Eugene Domingo

Directed by Wenn Deramas

A widower (Revilla) discovers that the recipient of the heart of his recently departed beauty queen-wife (Quigaman) is a comedy queen (De las Alas). Producer-star Revilla calls this "Father's Day" presentation "a celebration." He explains, "It shows the fun side of being a dad." For the action star-turned-senator, "Comedy is a stress-buster." The making of this film was preceded by a slew of intrigues regarding the non-casting of Gretchen Barretto. Asserts Quigaman: "I don't mind being second choice. I should thank Gretchen. If she didn't back out, I wouldn't have had this chance." This wacky romp is directed by Deramas, whose latest "D' Lucky Ones" was a surprise hit. Opens today.

The Lake House

Stars Sandra Bullock, Keanu Reeves, Shohreh Aghdashloo, Christopher Plummer

Directed by Alejandro Agresti

Based on the 2000 South Korean film "Il Mare," this film is "an epic love story" between a lonely doctor and a frustrated architect separated by two years, but who communicate through a magical mailbox. An audience favorite in the Pusan International Film Festival, its Hollywood version boasts two of the most photogenic actors of our time. Says Bullock of her screen chemistry with Reeves: "He was my first film partner in 'Speed.' We've never lost track of each other. The minute we began rehearsing, it was like coming home. It's an understanding and trust you can't explain … because we argue all the time." Joshua Tyler of Cinemablend.com thinks it's a "romantic rip-off of 'Frequency.'" Opens today.

OPENING/ A2-6

Gloria Romero: I've tried everything

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

"… in my career."

SHE IS THE ONLY SEPTUAGENARIAN with a glamour billboard along EDSA, but actress Gloria Romero remains as self-effacing as ever.

She demurs that credit for the billboard exposure goes entirely to beauty salon chain owner Ricky Reyes.

"Imagine, getting a 72-year-old woman to model for him? I was so happy and grateful to him. I can truly say that I've done everything in my career."

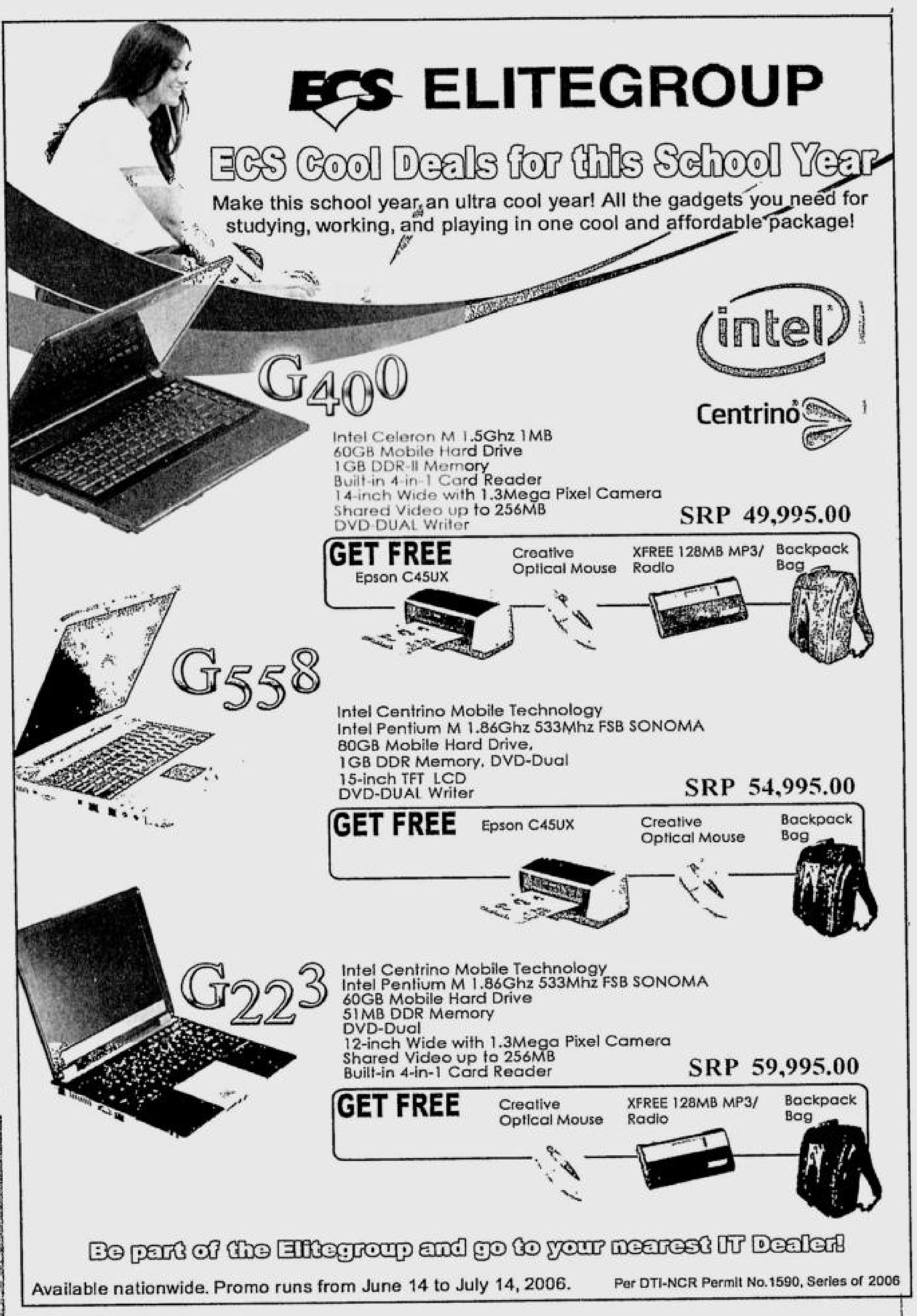
Including ride a motorcycle, play a drunk, a mob boss and Alzheimer's victim.

Indeed, one of her most famous movie lines goes: "Don't knock it till you've tried it."

Gloria is currently enjoying a career resurgence of sorts. Again.

She is co-starring with fellow Sampaguita Pictures graduate Eddie Garcia in "I Wanna Be Happy"—the new Seiko family comedy-drama directed by Jose Javier

GLORIA/ A2-2



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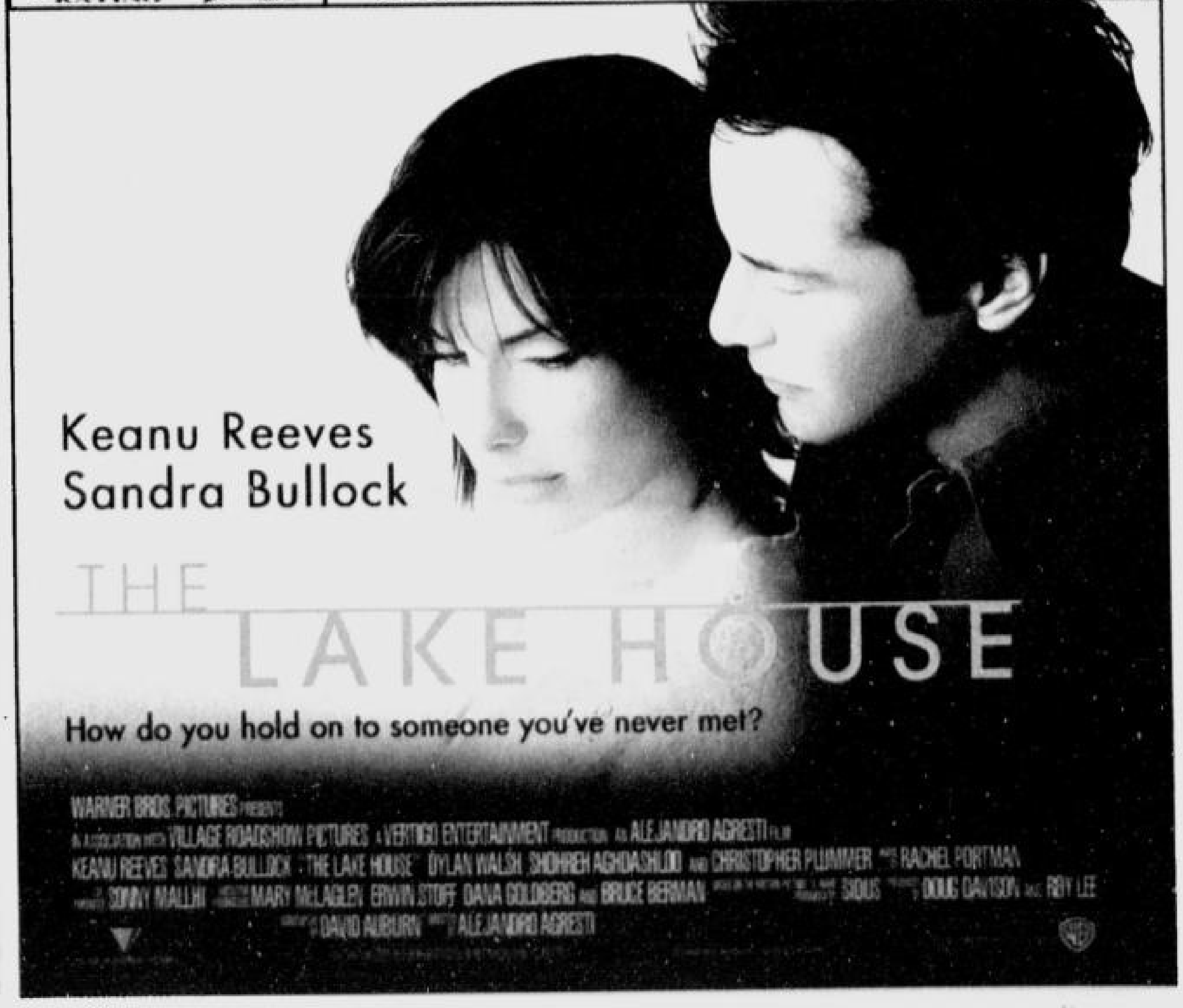

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Gloria : I've tried ...

From page A2-1

Reyes.

Two scripts submitted to the Metro Manila Film Festival—"Habang May Pangarap" and "No Other Love"—also propose the Gloria-Eddie tandem in the lead.

It's like they're the love team to beat.

"That's only because no one our age is still around," she quips, laughing.

Seriously, she is thankful to producer Robbie Tan for the meaty role in this new movie.

"These days I get only small roles. This is the biggest I've had in a while. The story centers on the couple, but everyone in the movie has his or her moment."

Chemistry

She plays an oppressed housewife who abandons her controlling husband on the eve of their 50th wedding anniversary—to the consternation of their children played by Cherry Pie Picache, Joey Marquez and Diana Zubiri.

"It's an ensemble film," she points out. The chemistry between Romero and Garcia is unmistakable, director Reyes agrees.

"I really made it a point to anchor the story on the old couple," Reyes says.

Garcia explains the ease between himself and Romero: "We've been working together for ages. Glo is such a lady—always pleasant, patient, professional."

Garcia was the *contravida* in her early Sampaguita movies like "Señorita" and "Dalagang Ilokana" in the 1950s. The latter gave Romero her first Best Actress trophy from Famas in 1954

Three decades later, they played husband and wife in Lino Brocka's "Miguelito" and Laurice Guillen's "Kung Mahawi Man ang Ulap."

"I've also worked with him as my director," Romero says.

2nd award

"The first time I directed her was in the [Ferdinand] Marcos election movie, 'Pinagbuklod ng Langit,' in 1969," Garcia recounts.

"Eddie gave me my next acting award after a 34-year gap," Romero says, "for 'Saan Nagtatago ang Pag-Ibig' (Best Supporting Actress) in 1988."

A trouper, she has never stopped acting since she made her screen debut in 1950 as a bit player in movies like "Dugong Bughaw" and "Bernardo Carpio."

"I would stop for just two to three months at a time," she says. Not even the passing of husband Juancho Gutierrez distracted her.

"It has been eight months," she says, turning wistful. "Losing a husband is not easy. We had been separated, but we were not enemies."

DID YOU KNOW...

NEW YORK — MEL GIBSON'S "THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST" RANKS AS THE MOST CONtroversial film of all time, according to Entertainment Weekly.

The magazine ranks the 25 films that have most shocked, disgusted and divided moviegoers, in its June 16 issue, on newsstands today. Coming in second is Stanley Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange"—a 1971 futuristic film famous for an ultra-violent rape scene during which "Singin' in the Rain" is played as soundtrack. Reports of copycat crimes led to the movie's withdrawal from distribution in Britain.

"The Da Vinci Code," now in theaters, came in at No. 13. *AP*

MTRCB RATING ▶ G GENERAL PATRONAGE
ALL AGES ADMITTED
HIS MAJESTY IS BACK.
GARFIELD 2
GRAND OPENING TODAY

BASED ON A TRUE STORY
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE BELL WITCH LEGEND? VISIT WWW.ANAMERICANHAUNTINGONLINE.COM
"AN AMERICAN HAUNTING RIVALS THAT OF THE 'THE EXORCIST' AND 'THE AMITYVILLE HORROR' AND LEAVES YOU IN UTTER SHOCK" HORROR-MOVIES, CA
THE LIVING NIGHTMARE OF ELIZABETH 'BETSY' BELL
ELIZABETH (BETSY) BELL SUFFERED A GREAT DEAL FROM THE BELL WITCH DEMON THROUGH ACTS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE BY HAVING HER HAIR PULLED AND GETTING SLAPPED AND PINCHED TO THE POINT THAT HER FACE AND ARMS WERE COVERED WITH WELTS AND BRUISES. THE INCIDENT WAS WITNESSED AND DOCUMENTED BY HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, AMONG THEM WAS ANDREW JACKSON, THE 7TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.
IT HAPPENED IN 1818
NOW IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN
OPENS TODAY
AN AMERICAN HAUNTING
THE BELL WITCH STORY

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification please call 729 7777

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G1 GLORIETTA 1	THE OMEN	X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	MANAY PO	ALL ABOUT LOVE			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	CARS	THE OMEN	THX INSIDE MAN 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	FAILURE TO LAUNCH	TAKE THE LEAD	X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	THE DA VINCI CODE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	THE OMEN					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	THX CARS 2:30, 5:10, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	THX THE OMEN 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	TAKE THE LEAD 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	X-MEN: THE LAST STAND 2:20, 4:30, 6:40, 8:50, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	INSIDE MAN 1:16, 3:46, 6:16, 8:46, 11:16 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX CARS	INSIDE MAN	THE OMEN	TAKE THE LEAD	X-MEN: THE LAST STAND		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	THE OMEN	CARS	FAILURE TO LAUNCH	AQUAMARINE / X-MEN			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	THE OMEN	CARS	TAKE THE LEAD	INSIDE MAN	X-MEN: THE LAST STAND		

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm
Greenbelt - 752 4853; from 11am to 12mn
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

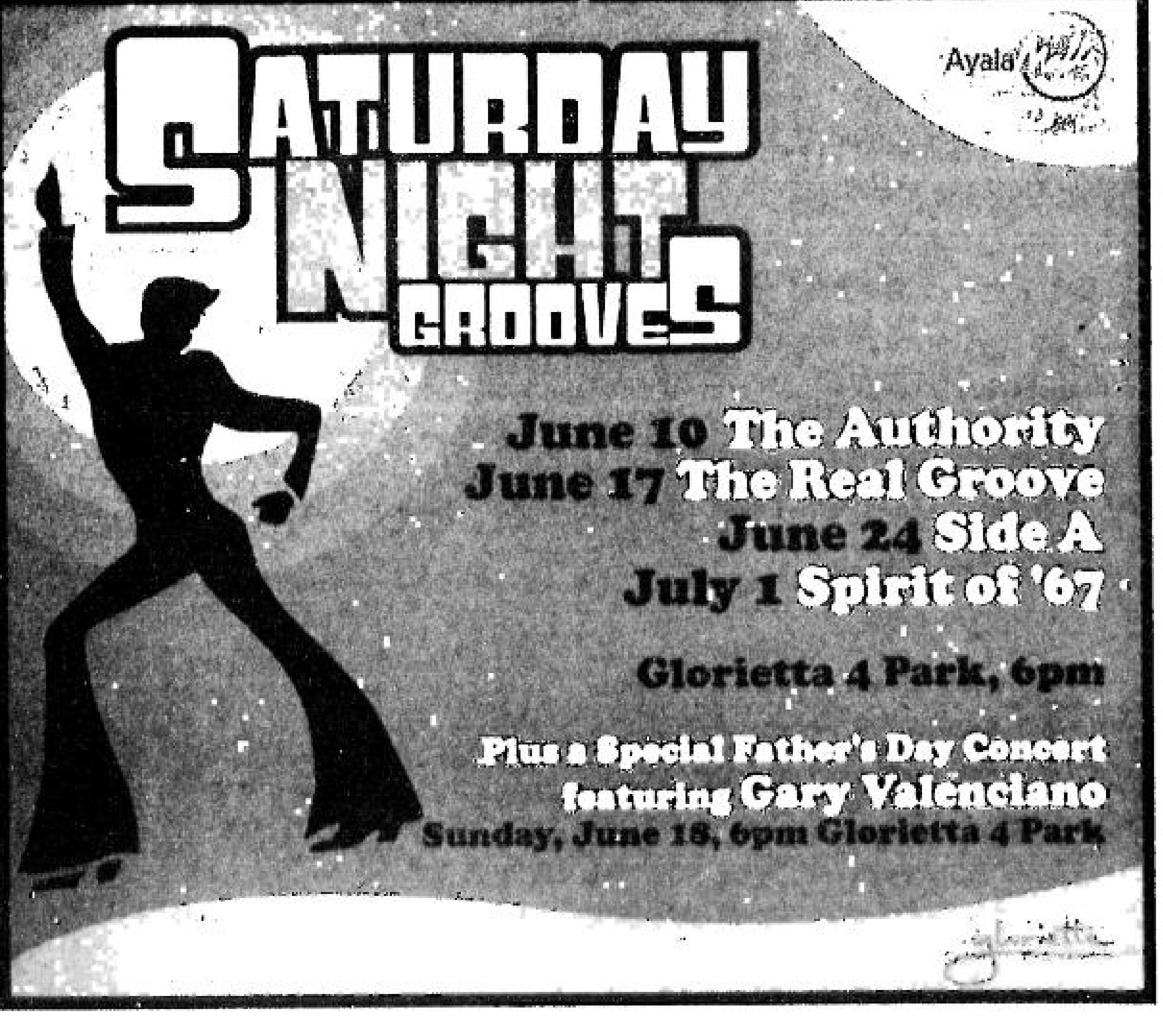
GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
BPI Techno Installment Madness June 7 to 18, 2006	JAB Boxing Exhibit June 23 to 25, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	**MARKET! MARKET!**
Kulokabildo.com Media Forum June 19, 2006	JAB Boxing Exhibit June 16 to 18, 2006

GREENBELT
Regards Croises: Parispace / Parisstreet Exhibit
June 1 to 21 / Greenbelt 3 Lobby

Onstage
The perfect spot for concerts, stage plays & corporate events is now accepting bookings for June to July 2006
For inquiries, pls. call 752-7862 or 757-3862

Ayala MUSEUM
PAROLA: Colonial Lighthouses in the Philippines
May 18 to June 18, 2006
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

WATCH
GARFIELD 2
AT
Ayala Malls CINEMAS
STARTING TODAY
For screening schedule, pls. call 729-7777
MTRCB Rating: General Audience (G)
Get a chance
to meet & greet
GARFIELD
LIVE!
June 14 (Wed.) & 18 (Sun.)
at the Glorietta 4 cinemas
PLUS!
other surprise treats
only at Ayala Malls Cinemas
www.garfieldmovie.com



June 10 The Authority
June 17 The Real Groove
June 24 Side A
July 1 Spirit of '67
Glorietta 4 Park, 6pm
Plus a Special Father's Day Concert featuring Gary Valenciano
Sunday, June 18, 6pm Glorietta 4 Park

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

1	2	3
CARS G	GARFIELD 2 G	OMEN 666 R13

4	5	6
THE INSIDE MAN PG13	TAKE THE LEAD PG13	THE LAKE HOUSE PG13

[illegible]

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

2 LAKE HOUSE
MTRCB GP
12 40, 3 00, 5 20, 7 40, 10 00

3 GARFIELD 2
MTRCB GP
1 20, 3 30, 5 40, 7 50, 10 00

4 CARS
MTRCB GP
11 40, 2 15, 4 50, 7 25, 10 00

PREMIERE THEATRE
OMEN 666
MTRCB R 13
12 00, 2 30, 5 00, 7 30, 10 00

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special

Catch the **French Film Festival 2006** at the **Shang Cineplex** from **June 9-18!** Celebrate French Spring as you enjoy a selection of critically acclaimed films, i e Me and My Sister (12 nn), The Raven (2 40 pm), Children of Paradise (6.20 pm), and Perfume of Lady (10 pm) at the **Cinema 1.**
Tickets are at **P50/ person.**

Call 633-7851, loc, 171 or 633-2227 for more details

Shangri-La Plaza

The news on TV, more and less

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

NOW THAT SOME TV NEWS PROGRAMS ARE trying to do better work, it's time for viewers to weigh in with their own inputs in this regard.

What improvement do you want to see in local news reportage on television? Do let us know.

As we await your suggestions, allow us to start with our own. Let's hope our news people on TV are open to these notes:

TV news shows should feature more real news and less crime stories, scandals and show biz items.

You ask: Aren't crimes also legit news? The general crime trends, yes; individual crimes, not really.

The point is that some TV news shows treat individual crime stories as capsule melodramas and action films, stressing their violence and emotional content. What do viewers really learn from the latest bank robbery, or the umpteenth hold-up, car crash or cell phone theft?

Some news shows even follow captured criminals to the police precinct, where they are accosted by their victims, who beat them up in retaliation, while the cops cooperatively avert their gaze for a few seconds.

And, in a few instances, the scenes are replete with embarrassingly florid "dialogue," as a philandering husband or accused rapist begs for forgiveness from his victim—who in true soap-opera fashion, lets loose with a more livid even "aria" of blame and shame.

All this in a news program?!

As for the scandals and show biz "news" items, they're all over the newscasts, pandering gossip and rumor in the name of fact.

Worse, some channels use their newscasts to plug the movies of their sister film companies, or the new TV shows of their mother network.

This is obviously beyond (and beneath) what a self-respecting newscast should do, so we wonder why otherwise responsible and judicious news executives allow it to happen, even on their most "prestigious" news programs.

And it's also a wonder why viewers don't raise a howl over these lapses in taste and good judgment.

Another off-putting aspect of local TV news reportage is field reporters' inflated image of themselves. Newspaper reporters don't call attention to themselves but TV reporters do—with a vengeance. The worst among them end their reports by shouting, for instance, "*Ako si PROCORPIO PONTIOPILATO, nag-uulat*!!!"

Wow. We hope all this ululation makes the reporter's day—because it certainly unmakes ours.

Finally, local TV newscasts really need to do more foreign news reportage. News from abroad may not be as popular with viewers here as local items, but it's important for the public to know how the rest of the world is faring, beyond the insular confines of our 7,000-plus emerald isles.

Black-Eyed Peas

On July 27, the popular Black-Eyed Peas will perform at Araneta Coliseum. The group, which includes Fil-Am Apld.de.ap, has become more popular than ever, so its fans should groove in even larger numbers to its hits, like "Where Is the Love?" "Let's Get It Started," "Shut Up," "Don't Phunk with My Heart," "Don't Lie," and "My Humps."

The performance is part of the group's promo tour for its latest album, "Monkey Business," a fusion of dance, funk, R&B and sould. The album includes a cut, "Bebot," that celebrates the Pinoy lifestyle. Tickets are available at the coliseum's box office and SM Ticketnet outlets.

'Brokeback Mountain' on video

Ang Lee's acclaimed film, "Brokeback Mountain," has been released on original video. Set in the '60s, the movie is about two young cowboys who develop a deep emotional attachment. They nurture the relationship through many years, while seemingly living macho lives as husbands and parents.

The joys and pains they experience become testimonies to the endurance and power of love.

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 THE OMEN
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
R-13

2 GARFIELD 2
12:05, 2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 8:45, 10:50
GP

3 CARS
11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30
GP

4 LAKE HOUSE
11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
GP

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN METRO MANILA

THEATRE MALL
GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 AMERICAN HAUNTING
CINEMA 2 THE INSIDE MAN PG13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a dinertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 GARFIELD 2 GP
CINEMA 4 CARS GP
CINEMA 5 LAKE HOUSE PG13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

JUNE 16,17,23,24,30,2006	NINA... in VERY MANILOW	9:00PM
JULY 8,2006	GLADYS GUEVARA	9:00PM

TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00PM
JUNE 16 ,17,23,24 ,2006	WERE STILL HOT "THE MUSICAL"	8:00PM
	FOR INQUIRIES PLS CALL 722-4532 LOC.116	

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangrila Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171
1 (DOLBY) FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL
2 (DOLBY) LAKE HOUSE GP
3 (DOLBY) GARFIELD 2 GP
4 (DOLBY) CARS GP
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) OMEN 666 R13

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) TAKE THE LEAD
2 (SDDS) THE DA VINCI CODE
3 (DTS) THE BENCHWARMERS
4 GOLD (DTS) X - MEN - 3
5 GOLD (DOLBY) CARS
6 GOLD (SDDS) THE INSIDE MAN
7 GOLD (DOLBY) THE OMEN 666
8 (DOLBY) CHAOS
9 (DOLBY) ALL ABOUT LOVE
10 (DOLBY) MANAY PO

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) THE OMEN 666
2 (DOLBY) CARS
3 (DOLBY) TAKE THE LEAD
CARS
4 (DOLBY) THE INDSIDE MAN

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 MANAY PO
2 (DTS) ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 (DOLBY) X - MEN - 3
4 CARS

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 MANAY PO
2 (DOLBY) CARS
3 (DTS) X - MEN - 3
4 ALL ABOUT LOVE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 MANAY PO
3 (DOLBY) THE POSEIDON

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 MANAY PO
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 (DOLBY) SILENT HILL
4 (DTS) X - MEN - 3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 X - MEN - 3
2 MANAY PO
3 (DOLBY) ALL ABOUT LOVE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 X - MEN - 3
2 MANAY PO

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 CARS
2 THE OMEN 666
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 THE INSIDE MAN

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) X - MEN - 3
2 (DOLBY) MANAY PO
3 (DOLBY) CARS
4 (DOLBY) THE OMEN 666

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) THE OMEN 666
2 TAKE THE LEAD
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 X - MEN - 3
5 THE INSIDE MAN

starmall EDSA - SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) THE DA VINCI CODE
5 MANAY PO

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 X - MEN - 3
4 RESERVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433994
1 MANAY PO
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 THE OMEN 666
4 CARS

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 CHAOS
3 MANAY PO

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 X - MEN - 3
2 AQUAMARINE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) POSEIDON
2 SENSES
3 BANDEDAS
4 (DTS) DALAGITA

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) OBSESSION
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 (DTS) X - MEN - 3
4 MANAY PO
5 CARS

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 X - MEN - 3
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 MANAY PO

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 THE OMEN 666
2 THE DA VINCI CODE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) CARS
2 MANAY PO
3 (DTS EX) THE OMEN 666
4 ALL ABOUT LOVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 MANAY PO
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 SILENT HILL
4 X - MEN - 3

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6271
X - MEN - 3
ALL ABOUT LOVE
RESERVED
RESERVED

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 MANAY PO
2 THE DA VINCI CODE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 X - MEN - 3
2 KAULAYAW

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

ARANETA CENTER
Gateway Ali MALL FarmersPlaza

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Gateway CINEPLEX*10
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

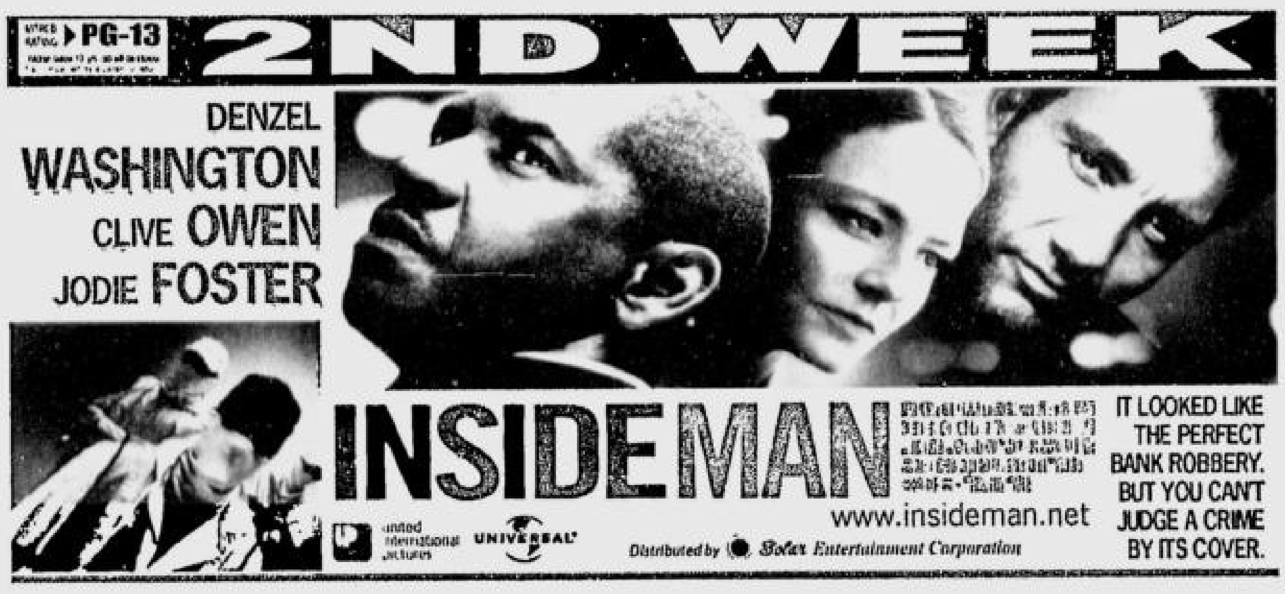
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO 12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40	GARFIELD 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	THE LAKE HOUSE 1:20 / 3:30 / 5:40 / 7:50 / 10:00	Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
CARS 11:00 / 1:30 / 4:00 / 7:30 / 9:00	AMERICAN HAUNTING	OMEN 666 12:00 / 2:30 / 5:00 / 7:35 / 10:00	
TAKE THE LEAD 1:00 / 3:50 / 6:40 / 9:30	THE DA VINCI CODE 12:30 / 3:40 / 6:50 / 10:00	X-MEN 3 12:40 / 3:00 / 5:20 / 7:40 / 10:00	GARFIELD 2 12 25 / 2 35 / 4 45 THE LAKE HOUSE 7.15 / 9.25

Ali MALL CINEMAS

1	KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO 12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45	2	THE LAKE HOUSE 12:20 / 2:20 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	3	X-MEN 3 11:30 / 1:50 / 4:10 / 6:30 / 8:50
4	CARS 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00	5	GARFIELD 2 12:15 R3 / 1.45 / 3:55 / 6:20 / 8:30		DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

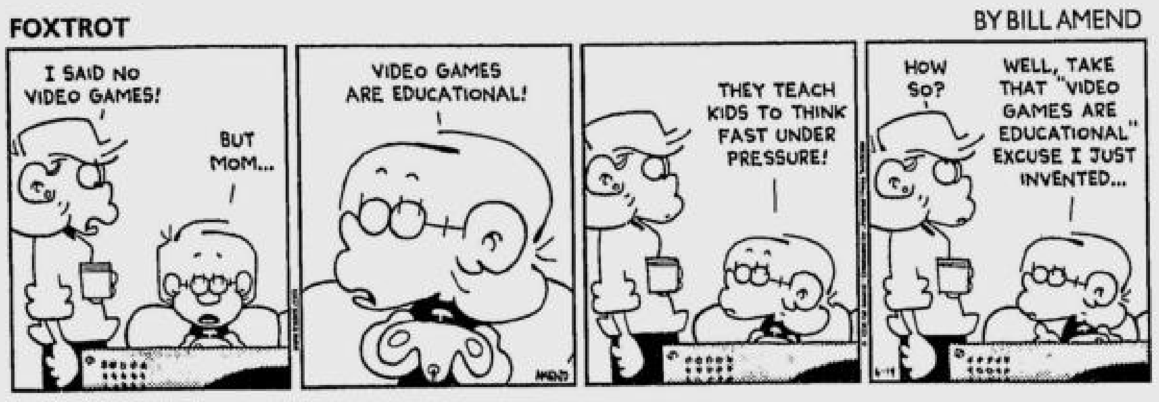
For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM
2006 WORLD SLASHER CUP II INVITATIONAL 8-COCK DERBY
JUNE 15 & 17
THE CASCADES WORLD TOUR 2006
JUNE 16, Friday 8 pm

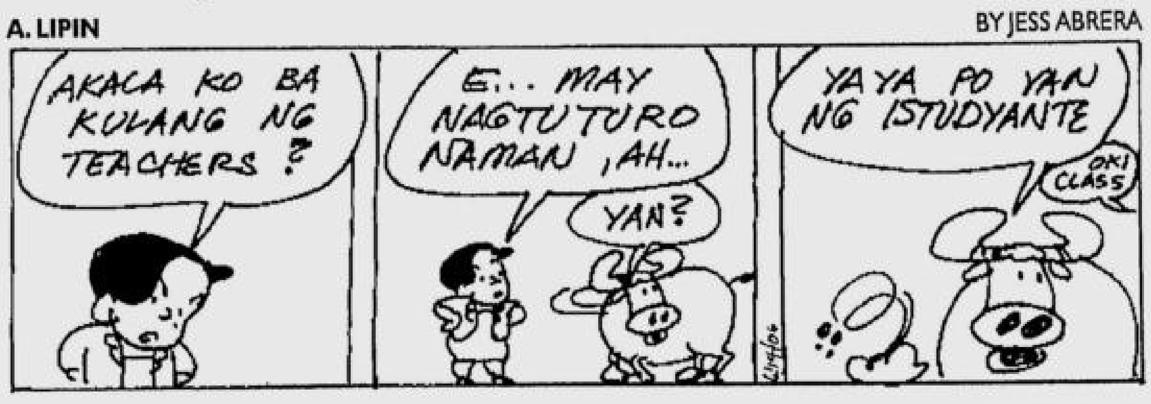


PG-13
2ND WEEK
DENZEL WASHINGTON
CLIVE OWEN
JODIE FOSTER
INSIDE MAN
www.insideman.net
IT LOOKED LIKE THE PERFECT BANK ROBBERY. BUT YOU CAN'T JUDGE A CRIME BY ITS COVER.
united international pictures UNIVERSAL
Distributed by Solar Entertainment Corporation

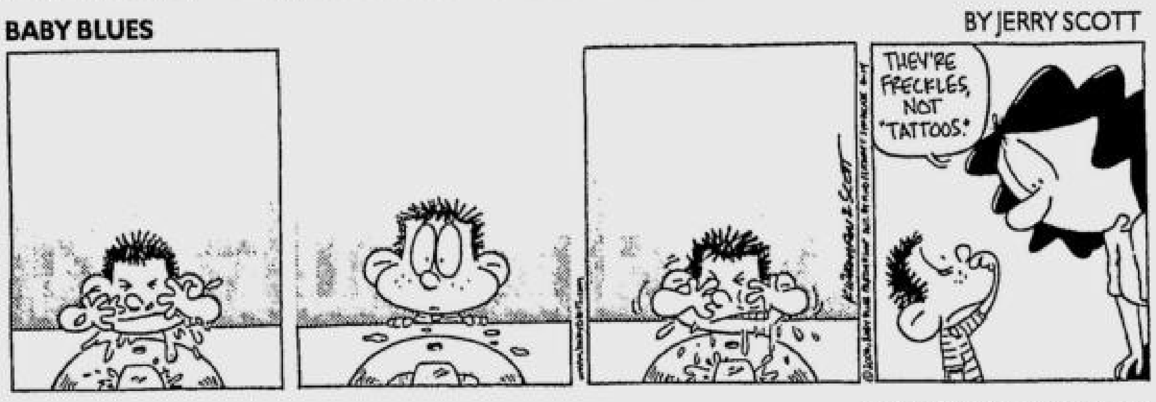
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


I SAID NO VIDEO GAMES!
BUT MOM...
VIDEO GAMES ARE EDUCATIONAL!
THEY TEACH KIDS TO THINK FAST UNDER PRESSURE!
HOW SO?
WELL, TAKE THAT "VIDEO GAMES ARE EDUCATIONAL" EXCUSE I JUST INVENTED...

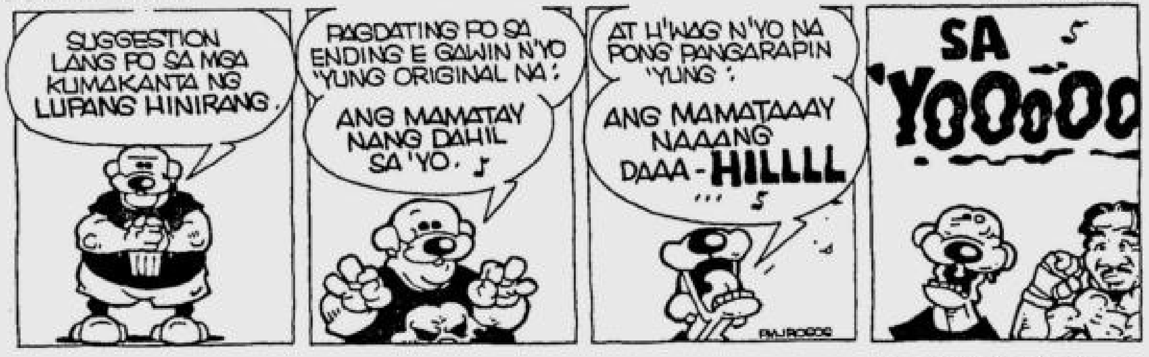
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


AKALA KO BA KULANG NG TEACHERS ?
E... MAY NAGTUTURO NAMAN ,AH...
YAN?
YAYA PO YAN NG ISTUDYANTE
OKI CLASS

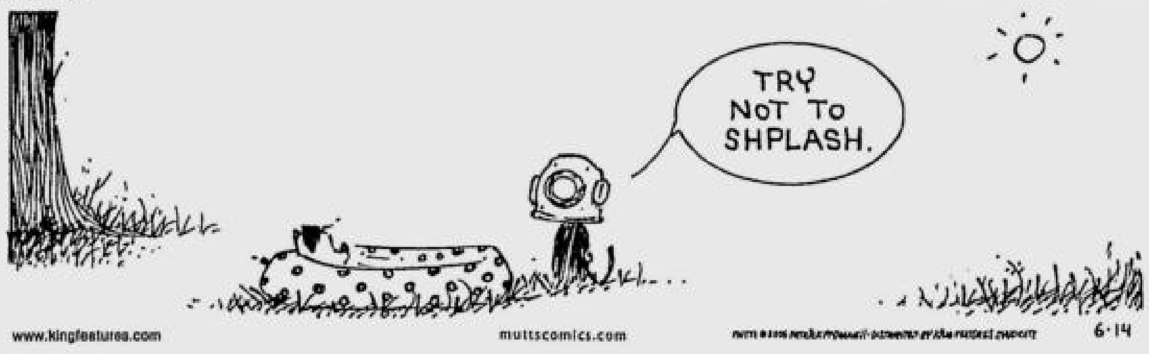
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


THEY'RE FRECKLES, NOT "TATTOOS."

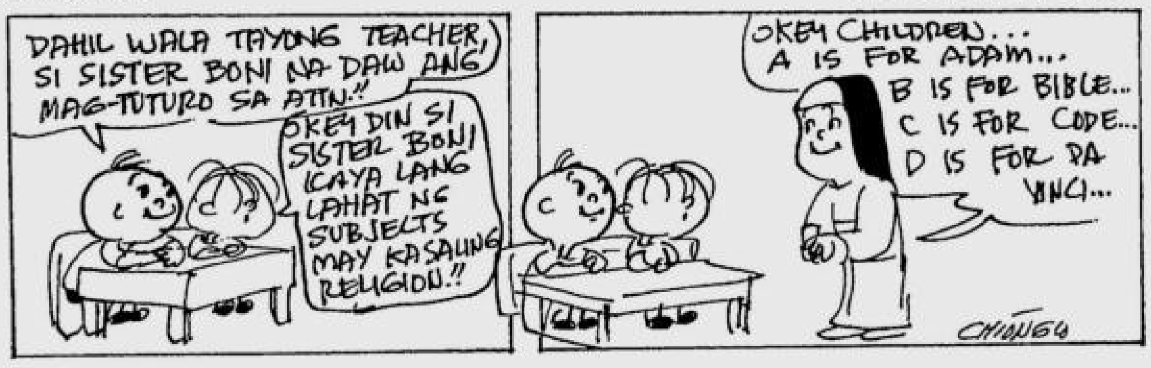
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


SUGGESTION LANG PO SA MGA KUMAKANTA NG LUPANG HINIRANG.
PAGDATING PO SA ENDING E GAWIN N'YO 'YUNG ORIGINAL NA:
ANG MAMATAY NANG DAHIL SA 'YO.
AT H'WAG N'YO NA PONG PANGARAPIN 'YUNG :
ANG MAMATAAAY NAAANG DAAA-HILLLL
SA 'YOOoOO

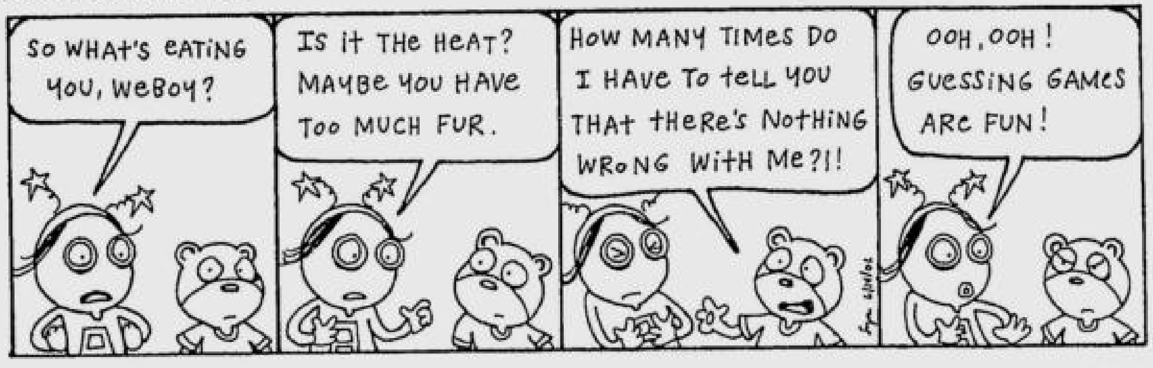
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


TRY NOT TO SHPLASH.
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
6-14

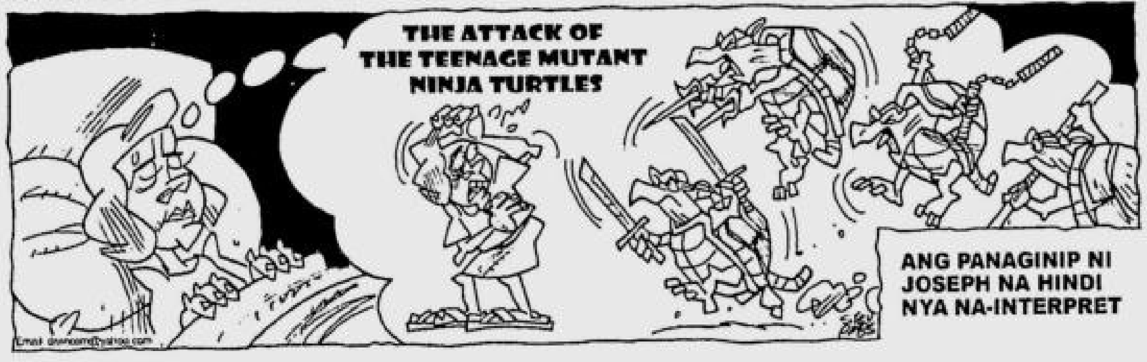
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DAHIL WALA TAYONG TEACHER, SI SISTER BONI NA DAW ANG MAG-TUTURO SA ATIN..!!
OKEY DIN SI SISTER BONI KAYA LANG LAHAT NG SUBJECTS MAY KASAMANG RELIGION.!!
OKEY CHILDREN... A IS FOR ADAM... B IS FOR BIBLE... C IS FOR CODE... D IS FOR DA VINCI...
CHIONGLO

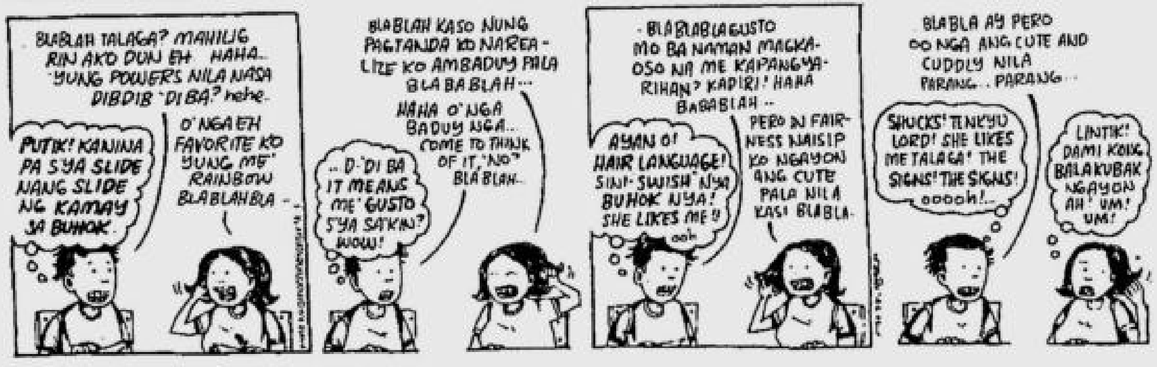
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SO WHAT'S EATING YOU, WEBOY?
IS IT THE HEAT? MAYBE YOU HAVE TOO MUCH FUR.
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH ME?!!
OOH, OOH! GUESSING GAMES ARE FUN!

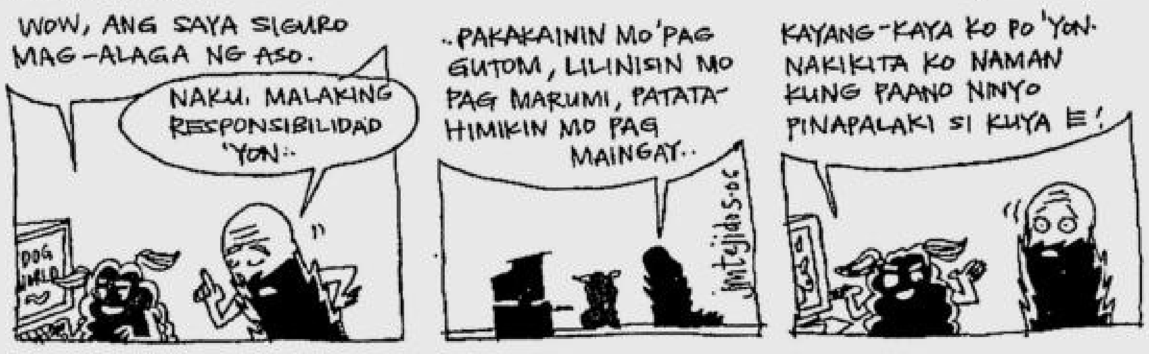
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THE ATTACK OF THE TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
ANG PANAGINIP NI JOSEPH NA HINDI NYA NA-INTERPRET

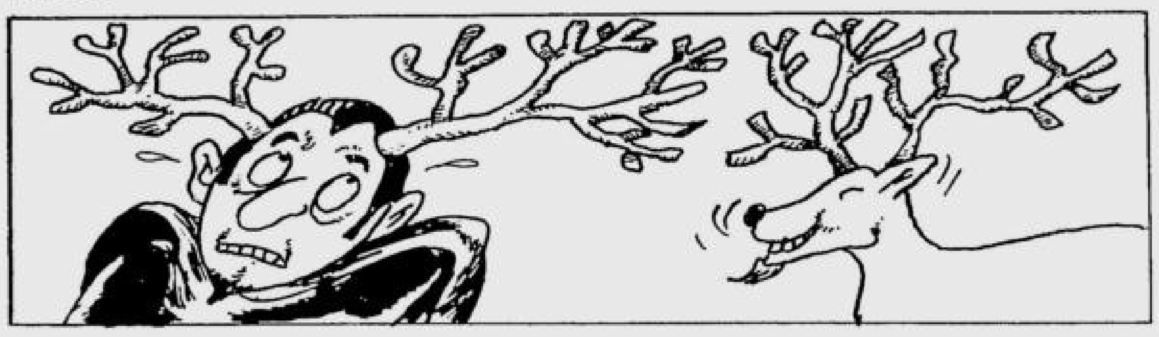
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


BLABLAH TALAGA? MAHILIG RIN AKO DUN EH HAHA.. 'YUNG POWERS NILA NASA DIBDIB 'DI BA? hehe
PUTIK! KANINA PA SYA SLIDE NANG SLIDE NG KAMAY SA BUHOK.
O' NGA EH FAVORITE KO 'YUNG ME' RAINBOW BLABLAHBLA --
BLABLAH KASO NUNG PAGTANDA KO NAREALIZE KO AMBADUY PALA BLA BABLAH...
HAHA O' NGA BADUY NGA.. COME TO THINK OF IT, "NO" BLA BLAH..
.. D-'DI BA IT MEANS ME' GUSTO S'YA SA'KIN? WOW!
- BLABLABLA GUSTO MO BA NAMAN MAGKA-OSO NA ME KAPANGYARIHAN? KADIRI! HAHA BABABLAH --
AYAN O! HAIR LANGUAGE! SINI-SWISH' NYA BUHOK NYA! SHE LIKES ME!! ooh
PERO IN FAIRNESS NAISIP KO NGAYON ANG CUTE PALA NILA KASI BLABLA-
BLABLA AY PERO OO NGA ANG CUTE AND CUDDLY NILA PARANG.. PARANG..
SHUCKS! TENKYU LORD! SHE LIKES ME TALAGA! THE SIGNS! THE SIGNS! ooooh!..
LINTIK! DAMI KONG BALAKUBAK NGAYON AH! UM! UM!

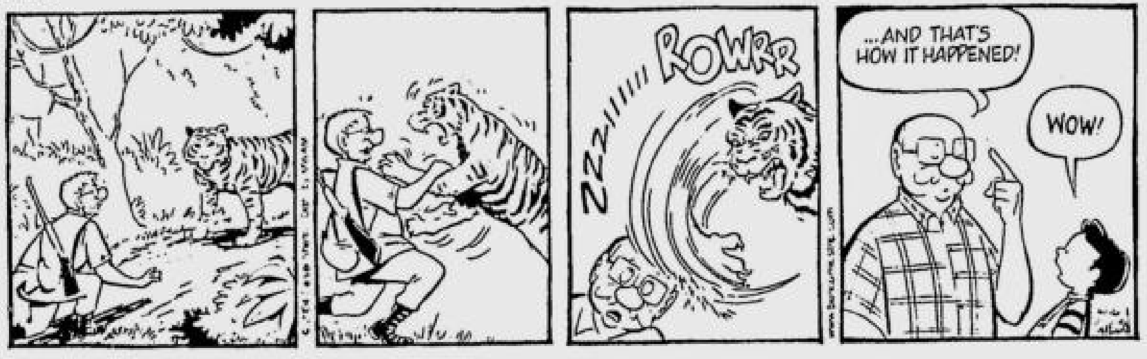
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


WOW, ANG SAYA SIGURO MAG-ALAGA NG ASO.
NAKU, MALAKING RESPONSIBILIDAD 'YON..
DOG WORLD
..PAKAKAININ MO 'PAG GUTOM, LILINISIN MO PAG MARUMI, PATATAHIMIKIN MO PAG MAINGAY..
KAYANG-KAYA KO PO 'YON. NAKIKITA KO NAMAN KUNG PAANO NINYO PINAPALAKI SI KUYA E!

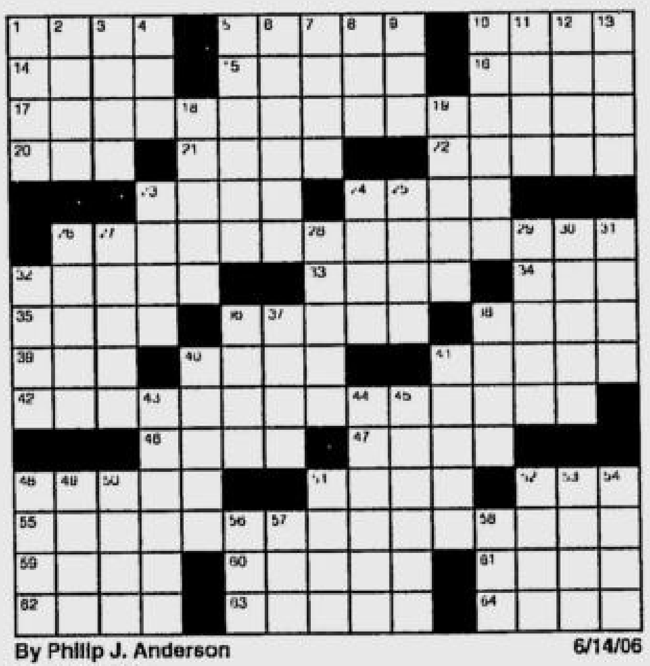
TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


ROWRR
ZZZ
...AND THAT'S HOW IT HAPPENED!
WOW!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
6/14/06

ACROSS
1 Creole veggie
5 __ Alegre, Brazil
10 Attired
14 Arena level
15 Blazing
16 Sitarist Shankar
17 Workaholic's schedule?
20 Black gold
21 66 and 1, e.g.
22 Mindful
23 Birdbrain
24 Hint for Holmes
26 Workaholic's schedule?
32 Movie daredevilry
33 Latest fad
34 "Peter __"
35 Reagan cabinet member
36 Taters
38 Hollow tube
39 Fancy vase
40 Flowerpot spot
41 Tendon
42 Workaholic's schedule?
46 __ does it
47 Ripens
48 Pseudonym
51 Hook's underling
52 Lingerie purchase
55 Workaholic's schedule?
59 Sweat outlet
60 Expansive
61 Florence's flooder
62 Ado
63 __ Carta
64 Villainous Uriah

DOWN
1 Bus driver on "The Simpsons"
2 New Zealander
3 Stagger
4 Prince Valiant's son
5 Running-back "Sweetness"
6 Affront
7 Spanish rivers
8 Play about Capote
9 "__ the land..."
10 Embroidery yarn
11 Molten flow
12 Affirm
13 Sup
18 Speckled fish
19 Food topping
23 Protracted
24 African nation
25 Stool parts
26 Video-game name
27 Feeling remorse
28 With sincerity
29 Offer a view
30 "R.U.R." playwright
31 Was certain
32 "Leaving Las Vegas" co-star
36 Caesar and Luckman
37 Join the game
38 Slapstick ammo
40 Secret supply
41 Sugary
43 Gat
44 From Pago Pago
45 Meeting outline
48 Elec. units
49 Plunder
50 Calvary inscription
51 EPA concern
52 Dullard
53 Futhark letter
54 Perched upon
56 Big Blue computer?
57 FDR's Blue Eagle
58 So there!

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

F	E	R	A	L		B	E	E	F		C	O	R	D
A	C	U	T	E		E	L	L	E		H	A	H	A
D	O	T	T	E	D	L	I	N	E		A	T	I	T
E	L	H	I		E	L	O	I		I	R	E	N	E
			L	I	G	H	T	N	I	N	G	R	O	D
C	U	R	A	C	A	O		O	N	C	E			
A	P	E		E	S	P	N		C	H	R	O	M	E
T	O	N	S			S	A	W			S	T	A	S
E	N	D	E	A	R		B	E	S	T		O	S	S
			A	V	O	W		I	H	O	P	E	S	O
V	I	R	G	I	N	I	A	R	E	E	L			
O	D	O	R	S		N	A	D	A		A	P	S	E
L	A	M	E		G	O	N	E	F	I	S	H	I	N
T	H	E	E		E	N	D	S		S	M	E	L	T
S	O	O	N		R	A	P	T		H	A	W	K	S

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6/14/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very definite: You have strong opinions, you know what you want, you see what's happening, and you never back down from a fight. You have a strong presence, both intellectually and literally. You are brave and bold. People listen to you. Personally, you need a lot of freedom of movement. The year ahead holds marvelous, fresh, new beginnings for you!

Birthdate of: Yasmine Bleeth, actress; Donald Trump, businessman/TV producer, Che Guevera, doctor/revolutionary.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Discussions with someone older or more experienced might discourage you today. Someone could be critical about how you deal with children or how you make choices for entertaining yourself. (Pay this no mind.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Discussions with parents, bosses and teachers might stifle you in some way. This passes very quickly. Don't let this bother you. Tomorrow is another day.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Plans to travel or do work connected with the media, publishing and education suddenly look difficult. But this is not the case. Go back to the drawing board.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): A lack of generosity from others might disappoint you today. Just bide your time. What makes someone tightfisted today will be gone by tomorrow.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Conversations with partners and close friends are bit stifled today. You feel blocked no matter which direction you turn. (This is just a temporary dark cloud in your horizon.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Routine matters at work are delayed or blocked in some way today. Everything seems like drudgery. Don't worry; this is a very brief influence. Courage!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): The responsibilities of children might weigh heavily on you today. Similarly, social plans look costly or like they're just too much trouble. (Gone by tomorrow.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Parents and authority figures might be trying today. There's no pleasing them! Try to avoid contact with bosses and VIPs. People are too easily critical today.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Optimism and physical activity are critical for your survival. Today, however, people are pessimistic! In turn, this makes you worry. (You need this like a fish needs a bicycle.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Financial constraints might cause you to rethink buying something. (Why is there always so much month left at the end of the money?) Later, you'll feel better

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): The Moon is in your sign today, but it opposes stern Saturn by this evening. This shuts down discussions with partners and close friends. Don't worry about it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Don't let your doubts and inner anxieties get the better of you today, especially this evening. This feeling will pass quickly (especially if you drink a lot of water).

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

5			3		1	9		4
			5			2		
2	1							
6							9	1
4	2							7
							7	5
		8			3			
1		9	8		5			6

Difficulty Level ★★★
6/14

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	8	2	6	5	4	7	3	1
3	1	6	7	8	9	5	4	2
5	7	4	3	2	1	6	9	8
2	3	8	9	7	6	4	1	5
1	9	7	2	4	5	8	6	3
6	4	5	8	1	3	2	7	9
4	2	9	5	3	7	1	8	6
7	5	3	1	6	8	9	2	4
8	6	1	4	9	2	3	5	7

Difficulty Level ★★

ENTERTAINMENT

OPENING THIS WEEK

From page A2-1

Garfield 2

A Tail of Two Kitties

Stars Breckin Meyer, Jennifer Love Hewitt, Lucy Davis

Directed by Tim Hill

Based on the comic strip by Jim Davis, this sequel trails the fat cat to England, where he is mistaken for a look-alike royal feline who has just inherited a castle. As expected, Garfield basks in the glory of his reign—bullying his loyal subjects. But a scheming Lord Dargis plots to get rid of the furry hero. Joshua Tyler of Cinemablend.com gasps: "What is amazing is that this film even exists. The first 'Garfield' … was almost universally panned … The sequel takes all the elements from the first movie and does them again … except in Europe. It's a tried and true sequel formula." Opens today.

An American Haunting

Stars Sissy Spacek, Donald Sutherland, Rachel Hurd, James D'Arcy

Directed by Courtney Solomon

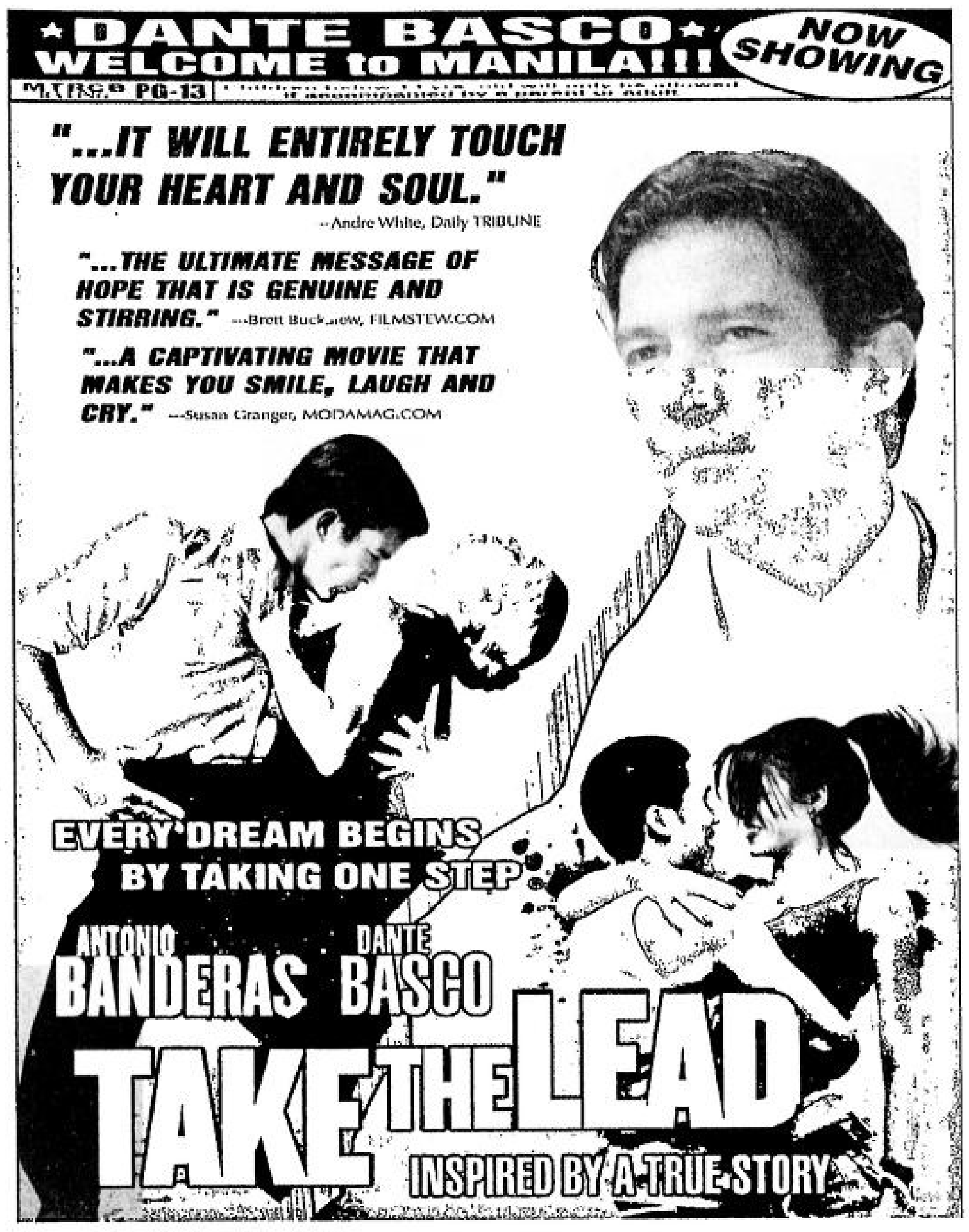
The scary thing is that this screamfest is inspired by real events that occurred in Tennessee in the 1800s. A malevolent, unseen force terrorizes a teenaged girl and her rich family. Ty Burr of the Boston Globe complains that it's "cringingly awful … amateur hour all around. The script is DOA … [It] sets the bar at a new low: It makes 'Blair Witch Project' look like a masterpiece of world cinema." Lisa Schwarzbaum of Entertainment Weekly agrees, describing it as a "standard, creaking, fake-spooky ghost story … with the unnecessarily famous cast gamely clutching shawls, muskets and such." Opens today.

The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift

Stars Lucas Black, Bow Wow, Sung Kang, Brian Tee

Directed by Justin Lin

A rebellious teener is sent to live with his tough father, a career military man stationed in Tokyo. Quite naturally, the lad gets entangled in a web of fast cars and dangerous games. The third part of a lucrative franchise tackles the underground sport of "drifting," Emmanuel Levy of Emmanuellevy.com reports. Levy quotes producer Neal H. Moritz as saying: "Drifting puts you in a trance … It's controlled chaos." It's described as "a very cinematic sport … something that's never been done before on film. New angles and camera moves were found to capture the action." Dan Goldwasser of Soundtracknet.com opines that "the score is thematic … something that has its own identity—not just part of a franchise." Opens Friday.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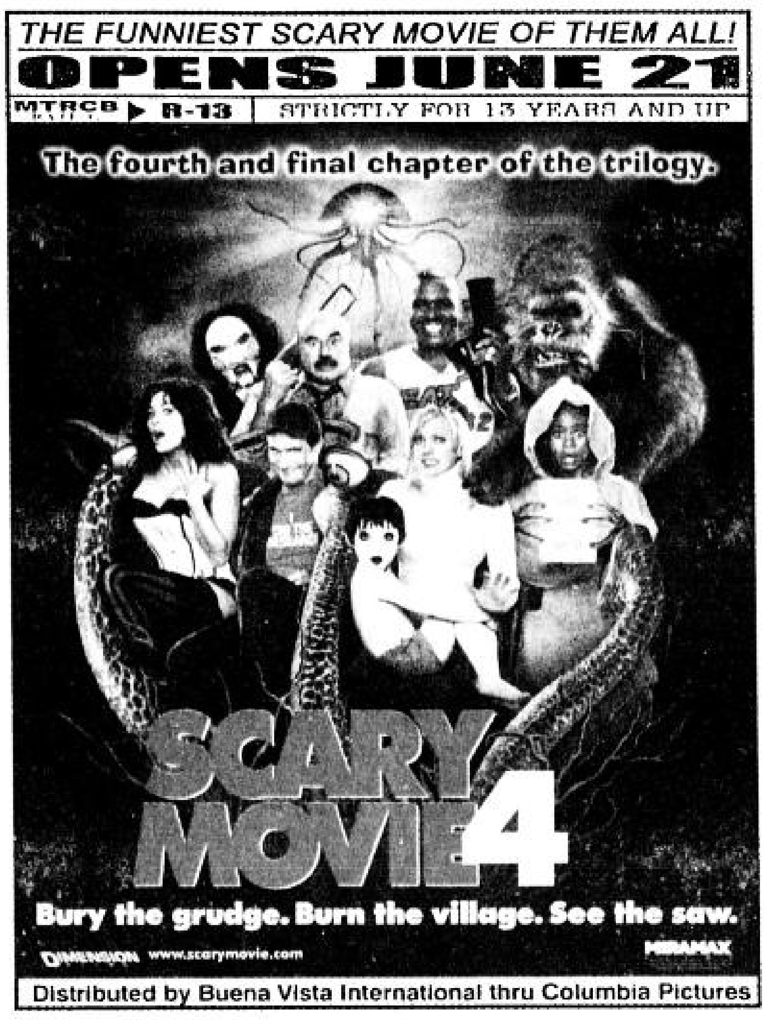
"...A CAPTIVATING MOVIE THAT MAKES YOU SMILE, LAUGH AND CRY." —Susan Granger, MODAMAG.COM
EVERY DREAM BEGINS BY TAKING ONE STEP
ANTONIO BANDERAS DANTE BASCO
TAKE THE LEAD
INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY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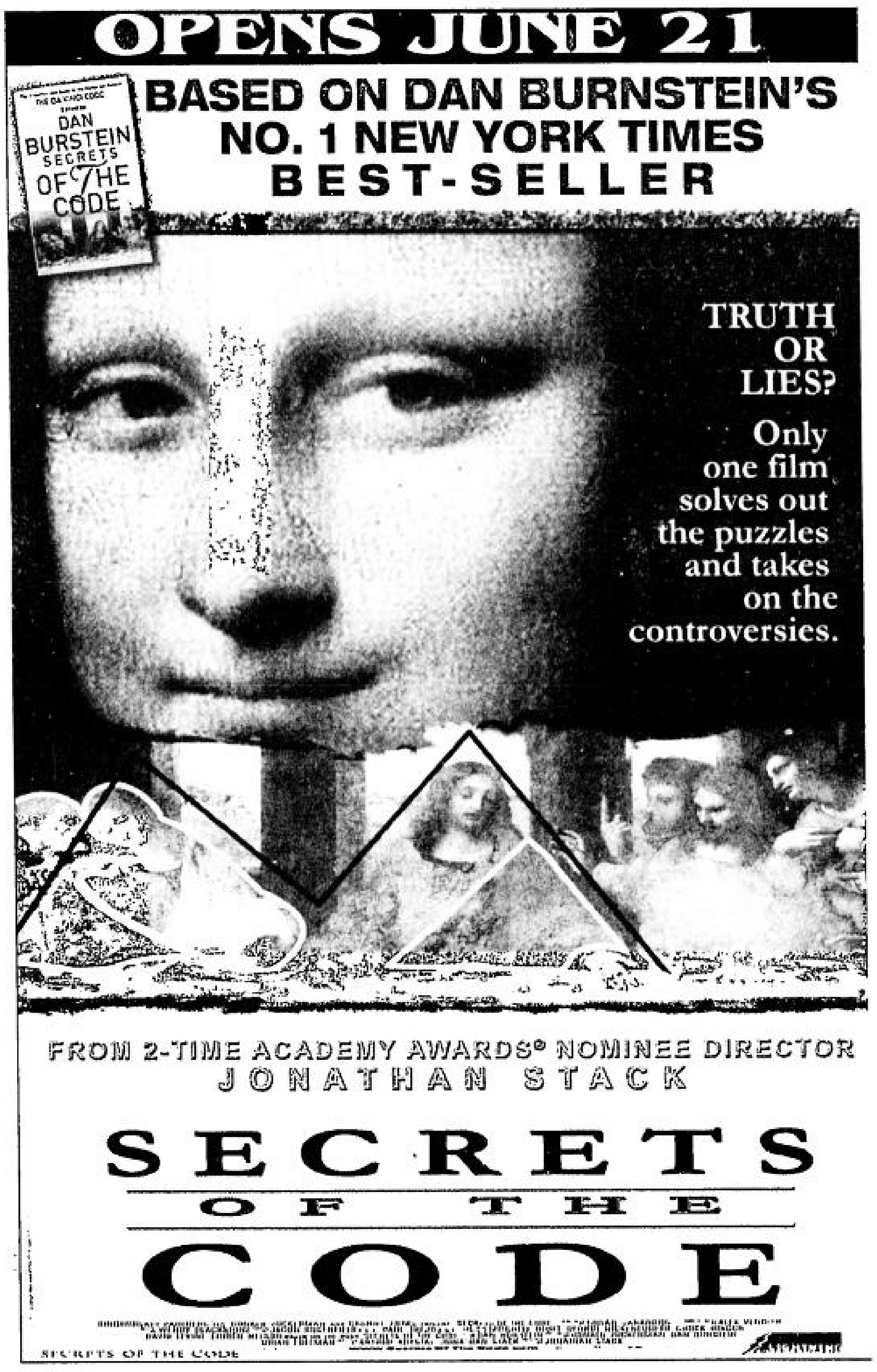
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures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SECRETS OF THE CODE

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KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
(Not Once But Twice)
Special Participation. BOBBY ANDREWS and CHOKOLEIT
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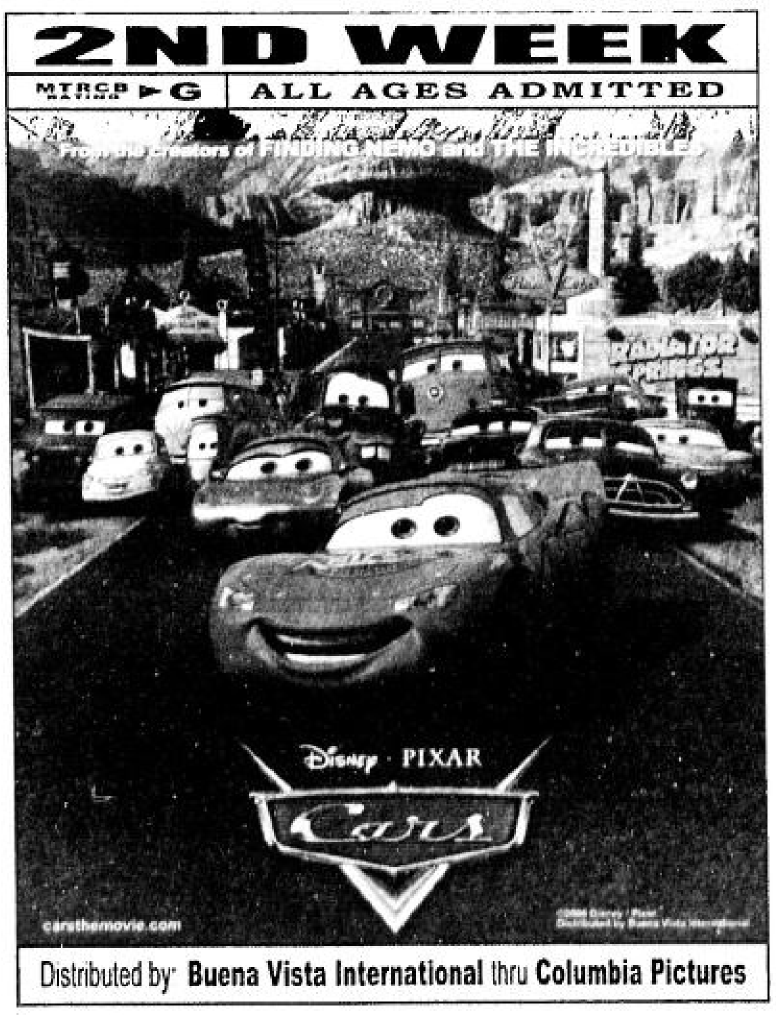
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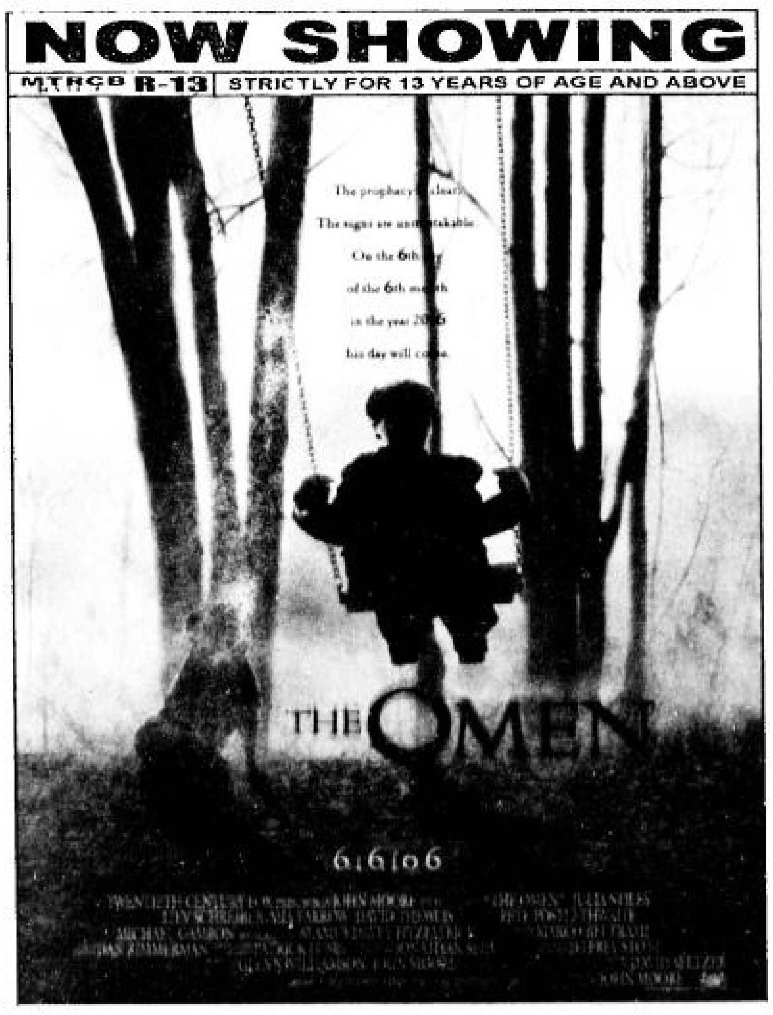
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MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
The prophecy is clear. The signs are unmistakable. On the 6th day of the 6th month in the year 2006 his day will come.
THE OMEN
6.6.06

OPENS JUNE 21
MTRCB RATING R-13 | STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP
PRAY YOU DON'T SEE HER
A FILM BY LUIS DE LA MADRID
THE NUN

WHAT'S INSIDE

P1-B Equitable question /B3

SSS stretches actuarial life by 12 years /B10

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Peso shaken, markets stirred

Rate pegged at ₱53.3:$1; share prices close lower

By Doris C. Dumlao and Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE COUNTRY YESTERDAY MARKED A DAY OF DECLINE ON the business front, brought on by prospects of additional US interest rate hikes.

Share prices yesterday closed 1.82 percent lower, while the peso dropped to its weakest level of 53.33:$1 this year.

Dealers said the downturn was made worse as the market on Monday was closed for a holiday, and was thus caught off-guard when Wall Street posted losses on both Friday and Monday.

Also, the regional markets were on edge over reports that the United States Federal reserve would increase its interest rate for the 17th time later this month.

The local currency opened at 53.25 and hit an intra-day low of 53.345 before closing at 53.33:$1, its lowest closing rate since ending at 53.40 against the greenback on Dec. 21 last year.

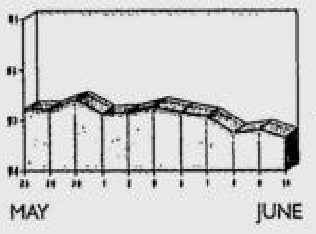
The peso, which has given up the sharp gains seen earlier this year, yesterday shed 16 centavos from Friday's closing of 53.17 against the greenback.

Currency traders said the foreign exchange market was not at all affected by the fresh bomb attacks in Metro Manila as much as reports that the US Fed is expected to continue its two-year monetary tightening campaign.

"The Philippines' good fundamentals are being dwarfed by external factors," said Ban-

PESO/ B2

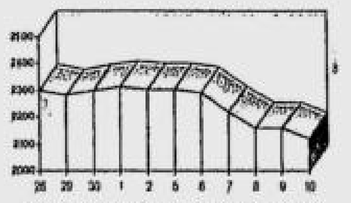
INDICATORS



₱ 53.33 = $1
As of 5 p.m., June 13, 2006

¥ 114.48 = $1
As of 5 p.m., June 13, 2006

GOLD: $590.30-590.80
per ounce Hong Kong, June 13, 2006



(See stock market report on Page B5)

Good news, bad news in 2006 budget passage

THE GOOD NEWS IS, IF CONGRESS WERE TO fail in passing the 2006 national budget, the national government's budget deficit could be trimmed to as low as P40 billion this year.

The bad news is, without the budget, plans to boost infrastructure spending would be derailed.

With the deficit expected to hit P40 billion this year, the national government could easily achieve a balanced budget by next year, or a year ahead of its target.

This is according to the Department of Finance's estimates. Officials said that the national government's fiscal position would be much improved if it were to operate on a reenacted budget.

Under the government's fiscal program, it is supposed to reduce its budget deficit to P125 billion this year, to P63 billion next year, and post a balance budget by 2008.

The bicameral conference committee of Congress failed to pass the bill on the 2006 national budget before it entered into a recess starting this week because of the opposing stand of the upper and lower chambers.

While the Lower House wants the proposed P1.053-trillion budget intact, the Senate wants it significantly cut to only

TITLE/ B2

Treasury rejects all T-bill bids

By Michelle V. Remo

EVEN AFTER STAYING OUT OF THE MARKET for almost a month, the government was still forced to reject all bids for Treasury bills in yesterday's auction to block attempts of banks to push interest rates up by more than 3 percentage points.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the government would rather disrupt its borrowing program than lend to a market that was, at the moment, displaying very weak appetite for government securities. Not only were the banks asking for high risk premium, he said, they were also not offering substantial bid volume.

Had the Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee accepted the bids for the 91-day Treasury bill, its rate could have climbed to as high as 8.7 percent or 370 basis points more than the 5 percent recorded in last month's auction.

The rate for the 182-day bill could have jumped 341.3 basis points to 9.147 percent, while that for the 364-day bill could have increased by 345.1 basis points to 9.406 percent.

The last time the BTr auctioned off government securities was on May 15, when it accepted only some of the bids to avoid "absurdly" high interest rates.

TREASURY/ B2

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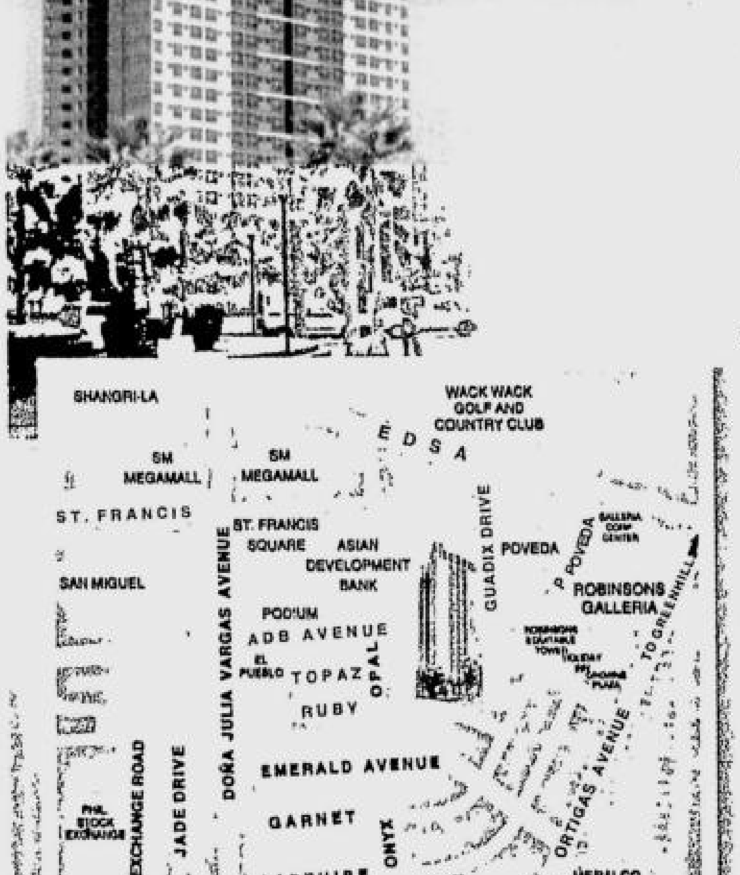
At the heart of the busy city lies a comfortable and affordable home, here at East of Galleria.



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PLDT ups '06 profit target

By Daxim L. Lucas

EARNINGS OF THE COUNTRY'S largest telecommunications firm—excluding gains from foreign exchange fluctuations—will grow further this year, despite management's earlier forecast of a more modest increase.

Speaking during the annual stockholders meeting of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), its chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan said he expects "core earnings" to rise by "more than 10 percent" this year to P32 billion.

This is slightly higher than the P31-billion 2006 earnings forecast he made early last month.

The bulk of the company's earnings are expected to come from its wireless business, specifically its Smart Communications Inc. and Pilipino Telephone Corp., both of which are leaders in their respective mobile phone market segments.

Last year, PLDT earned only P29 billion in core earnings plus close to P5 billion in one-time gains from the strengthening of the peso against the dollar, for a net income of P34 billion—the highest level reported by any Philippine company in history.

At the same time, however, Pangilinan warned that the company is faced with the steep challenge of sustaining growth as profits in the mobile phone business plateaus.

"The greatest concern we face today is our ability to maintain sustained and steady revenue, or topline, growth," he said.

"Revenues from our wireless business are rising at a pace that is moderate when compared with previous years, as the wireless penetration S-curve starts to flatten," the PLDT chair added, describing the graphic pattern of mobile phone subscriber growth.

PLDT has already begun to experience the "challenging" operating environment seen this year, having reported muted earnings growth in the first quarter.

The company earned P8.6 billion in the first three months of 2006, representing a 7-percent decline compared to the P9.2 billion in the same period last year.

In his speech, Panglinan said the company will invest up to $1 billion over the next three to four years to develop new lines of business to offset the slowing growth in the wireless sector.

He outlined the shift in emphasis in the company's revenue drivers from the traditional voice business to using its landline infrastructure to transmit data.

Also, the company has shifted the burden of revenue growth on its information and communications technology arm, ePLDT.

Of late, the company has been on a buying spree, acquiring business process outsourcing firm SPI Technologies and online gaming company PhilWeb Inc.

Treasury rejects ...

From page B1

By deciding to cancel one T-bill and three Treasury bond auctions, the government gave up P13.5 billion in potential borrowings. The government was programmed to borrow P3 billion from each T-bill auction and P3.5 billion from every treasury bond bidding.

"Look at the offer size and you will see that the market does not want to bid. You can lead a horse to the water, but you can't force it to drink," Cruz told reporters after yesterday's failed auction.

He said the auction committee could have agreed to accept higher interest rates if these were matched with high volume of bids.

Cruz noted that volume of bids for the 91-day bill reached only P950 million, lower than the government's supposed P1-billion debt offering.

While the government is faced with the difficulty of raising cash domestically, it likewise could not immediately go to the international market for borrowings as interest rates overseas are also rising.

"No issuer in its right mind would enter the market at this time because of uncertainty," Cruz said. He noted that Indonesia backed out from its earlier plan to raise $200 million offshore because of high interest rates sought by the international market.

Cruz said the BTr could still afford to reject yesterday's bids with the national government's still healthy cash position.

The unsteady foreign market is blamed on the increasing US interest rate, which has made bonds of emerging economies like the Philippines less attractive.

Good news ...

From page B1

P1.027 trillion.

The Senate did not approve of the budget allocated for the alleged pork barrel projects "Kilos Asenso Movement" and the "Kalayaan Barangay Program," which the executive branch said were developmental initiatives that include infrastructure-enhancement programs.

The failure of Congress to pass the proposed budget meant that the national government would have to operate using its 2005 budget, which programmed government expenditures at only P918.62 billion.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said that if the government this year would operate using the 2005 budget, then it would trim down its borrowing program by about P85 billion. This, in turn, would also result in P6 billion worth of savings from interest payments.

He said reducing the budget deficit earlier than schedule would have a positive impact on the country's credit standing, as credit rating agencies base their assessments on the government's fiscal position.

But if the Arroyo administration's economic managers would have their way, they would still insist on having the proposed 2006 budget approved because of the need to pump-prime the economy through higher spending for infrastructure.

The economic managers noted that while neighboring countries' infrastructure spending stands at an amount equivalent to over 5 percent of their gross domestic products, the Philippines has lagged behind with only a 2-percent capital outlay-to-GDP ratio.

Michelle V. Remo

Peso shaken ...

From page B1

co de Oro Universal Bank strategist Jonathan Ravelas. "US interest rates have continued to rise, but are still below historic highs, so there's still room to head in that direction."

Ravelas noted that the US Fed's overnight rates had peaked at 6.75 percent in the 1970s.

A US Fed official earlier indicated that he was no longer comfortable with the inflation rate in the world's largest economy, boosting expectations that another quarter percentage hike could be inevitable during the next US Fed Open Market Committee meeting on June 29.

Ravelas noted that the Japanese yen and the euro had already tumbled against the US dollar overnight, as further interest rate increases by the US Fed would make the greenback more attractive.

"Given the fact that [the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas] won't raise interest rates for now, investors see the US dollar as a safe haven," Ravelas said.

But British bank Standard Chartered expects the BSP to hike its overnight borrowing rate by a quarter percentage to peak at 7.75 percent in the third quarter, given the country's strong consumer spending and liquidity growth.

The BSP has kept its overnight borrowing rate at 7.5 percent since October last year, after tightening its key policy rates for a total of 75 basis points in 2005 on top of a two-percentage increase in the reserve requirement.

At the Philippine Stock Exchange, the composite index lost 39.21 points at 2,120.29 points after trading between 2,111.55 and 2,159.50.

This was the composite index's lowest close in more than three months when, on March 13, it closed at 2,121.76.

Volume stood at 1.65 billion shares worth P1.94 billion ($36.5 million).

The broader all-shares index fell 20.30 points to 1,348.34, with all the sub-indices falling in the red.

Losers led gainers 77 to 15, while 30 stocks were unchanged.

Analysts said the local stock market this week would be held hostage by trends in global markets. *With a report from AFP*

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NOTICE TO ALL BUSINESS NAME REGISTRANTS

dti
TRADE & INDUSTRY

PURSUANT TO SECTION 12 (A) OF DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 15 SERIES OF 1990, THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY THROUGH THE BUREAU OF TRADE REGULATION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION, CANCELS FROM THE RECORD ALL BUSINESS NAME REGISTRATIONS WHICH EXPIRED AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2005 EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2006.

UNDER THE BUSINESS NAME LAW (ACT NO. 3883), AS AMENDED, OWNERS OR PROPRIETORS SHOULD RENEW THEIR BUSINESS NAME REGISTRATION UPON EXPIRATION THEREOF.

THIS ANNOUNCEMENT SERVES AS A FORMAL NOTICE TO ALL CONCERNED.

FOR STRICT COMPLIANCE.

14 June 2006, Makati City.

(Sgd.) VICTORIO MARIO A. DIMAGIBA
Director BTRCP

(PDI–June 14, 2006)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Date/Time		NON-REFUNDABLE FEE
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
1 lot Supply, Delivery and Installation of Systems Furniture at LBP Cabanatuan Branch	P3,127,000.00	June 16 2006 2:00 pm	June 28, 2006 1:00 PM	P 1,600.00

The Bid Documents shall be available at the General Services Department starting June 7, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at GSD Conference Room, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila.

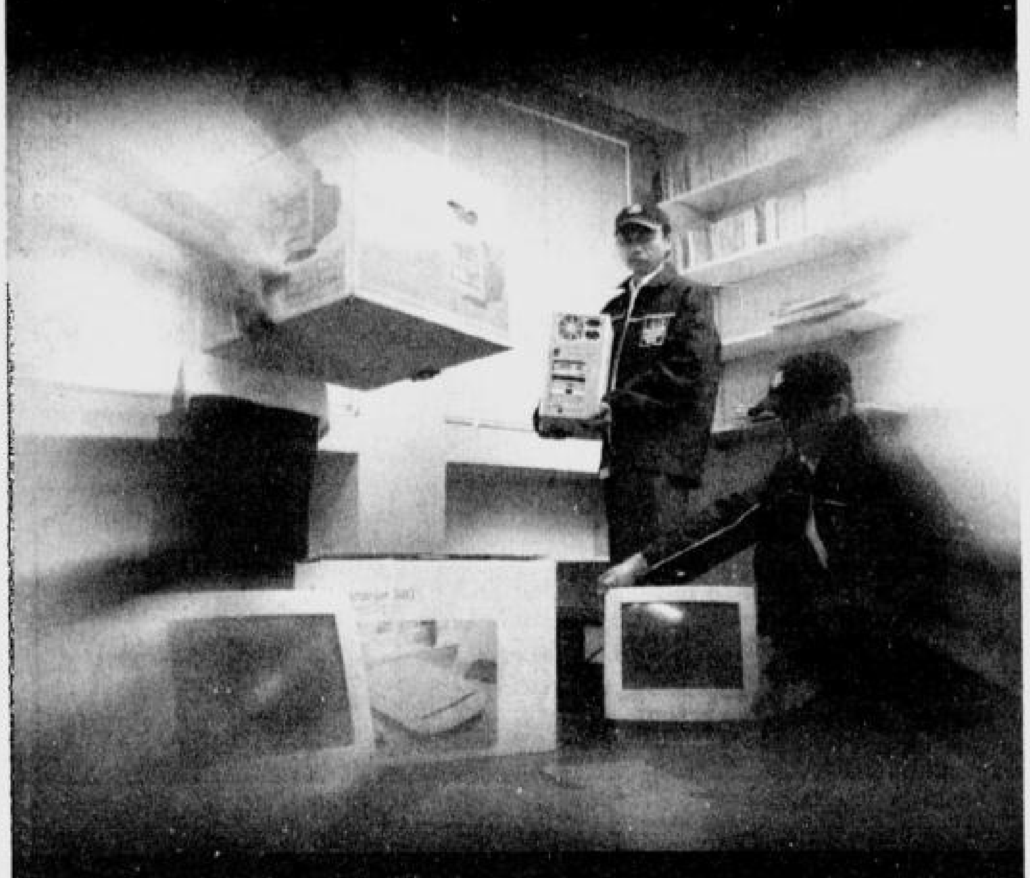
The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the LBP-Requisitions Management Division at telephone nos. 551-2200 locals 2452, 2453, 7233 & 7234.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI-June 7 & 14, 2006)



PILIPINAS ANTI-PIRACY TEAM

TO ALL Companies: YOU ONLY HAVE 7 DAYS TO GO!

You only have 7 days left in the 30-day reprieve period given by the Pilipinas Anti-Piracy Team (PAPT) for companies to legalize their software.

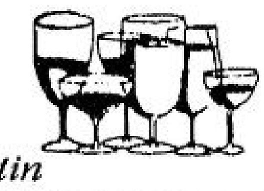
Come **June 21**, the PAPT will start conducting raids against companies that continue to use unlicensed software.

Don't let your investments go down the drain by not taking action while there's still time.

Find out what's inside your company's PCs. Legalize all your software before it's too late.

NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
OPTICAL MEDIA BOARD
PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE

₱1-B Equitable question



COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

EQUITABLE PCIBANK CANCELLED TODAY'S scheduled board meeting to give more time for its lawyers to study the implications of the Supreme Court decision ordering the bank to return the board seat of its former vice chair, Ferdinand Martin Romualdez.

Stung by the chastisement it received from the high tribunal, the Presidential Commission on Good Government in turn issued a press release claiming Romualdez had "questionably" withdrawn P137 million from an Equitable PCIBank account lodged under the still sequestered Romualdez corporation.

According to the grapevine, the Romualdezes have anywhere between P600 million and P1 billion in deposits locked in the bank, from original deposits in the then PCIBank that had compounded since 1986.

The PCGG claimed Romualdez withdrew P137 million out of that amount in October 2005, when the latter briefly served as bank chair.

The bank's corporate secretary at that time, Pelagio Ricalde, a former SEC official, had opined that, in the light of a number of Supreme Court decisions on sequestration, there was no more legal impediment for the withdrawal.

The withdrawal was used by the PCGG to ask the Sandiganbayan to prevent Romualdez, son of former Ambassador and Leyte Gov. Benjamin Romualdez, from voting his family's 7.13-percent stake in last month's shareholders' meeting.

That PCGG action and the Sandiganbayan's "farce" decision, the Supreme Court ruled last week, were "tantamount to abuse of judicial process."

Money-go-round

- THE LANDMARK Bonuan Seafoods Restaurant in Baguio has closed down, like other family-owned restaurants and small shops in the Pines City whose patronage has dwindled, so the owner tells friends, ever since the crowd-drawing SM mall opened.
- DESPITE the onset of the low season,

COCKTALES/ B6

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CEBU 417-8286	SM FAIRVIEW Basement 418-7540	ROBINSONS GALLERIA Basement 635-5061

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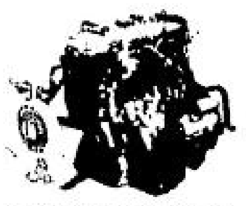
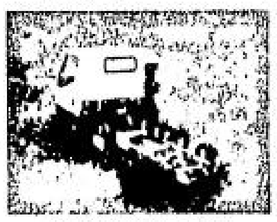
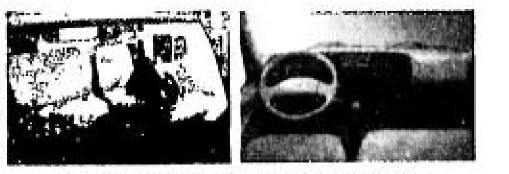


Mas Malakas! Mitsubishi 4D34-2A Direct Injection Diesel Engine provides more power and torque



Mas Matatag! Strong, reliable and durable chassis with improved safety features.



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FUSO

25th Death Anniversary of
Dr. Manuel S. Enverga, Sr.
June 14, 2006

Schedule of Masses

5:30 A.M.	-	St. Jude Parish Church, Cotta, Lucena City
6:00 A.M.	-	St. Ferdinand Cathedral Parish Church, Lucena City
6:00 A.M.	-	St. Isidore Parish Church, Red-V, Lucena City
6:00 A.M.	-	San Buenaventura Parish Church, Mauban, Quezon
6:00 A.M.	-	San Pedro Bautista Parish Church, Candelaria, Quezon
6:00 A.M.	-	St. Jerome Emiliani Parish, Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City
6:30 A.M.	-	St. James the Great Parish, Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City
7:00 A.M.	-	St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Church, Magallanes Village, Makati City
8:00 A.M.	-	St. Vincent Parish Church, Sampaloc, Quezon
8:00 A.M.	-	Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Church, San Antonio, Quezon
8:00 A.M.	-	University Gymnasium, MSEUF Campus, University Site, Lucena City
10:30 A.M.	-	Immaculate Conception Parish Church, Catanauan, Quezon
5:00 P.M.	-	San Buenaventura Parish Church, Mauban, Quezon
5:30 P.M.	-	Holy Face of Jesus, Sta. Veronica Church, University Site, Lucena City
6:00 P.M.	-	St. Ferdinand Cathedral Parish Church, Lucena City
6:00 P.M.	-	St. Jerome Emiliani Parish, Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City
6:30 P.M.	-	St. James the Great Parish, Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City

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"I am the Resurrection and life,
He who believes in Me will live,
Even though he dies and whoever
believes in Me will never die."

Our Dearly Beloved

Hon. Judge Pedro Soriano Espina Sr.

(May 19, 1931 – June 12, 2006)

Now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of the Lord at the age of 75.

His loving wife **Carmen**, children and daughters-in-law **PC Captain Joseph** (†) and **Joy, PSSUPT Dindo** & **Maridee, Rock** & **Judy**, **Dr. Allan**, **PSUPT Rainier** & **Lolit**, **Jeffrey** & **Marge**, grandchildren, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Presidential Suite, Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on June 18, 2006, Sunday at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat after the 9:00 a.m. Holy Mass.

Dr. Claudette Cecilia Magadia-Aguilon

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on June 12, 2006 at the age of 45.

Her bereaved husband **Dennis**; mother **Elvessa**; siblings **Bess, Atoy & Marivic, Leo & Zeny, Charo & Jolly, P.I. & Paulette, Elvis**, nephews & nieces, in-laws, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel 2B, Nacional Memorial Homes, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City until Wednesday, June 14, 2006 and will be transferred to Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Interment will be on Sunday, June 18, 2006 after the 1:30 p.m. Mass at the San Nicolas de Tolentiono Parish Church.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
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NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
PABLO S. SARMIENTO, SR.	Superior Chapel, Quezon City	June 17, 2006 after the 4:00 p.m. Mass	San Jose Cemetery, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan
ATTY. LUIS SALVADOR CAPULONG	Imperial Chapel, Quezon City	June 15, 2006 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass	Loyola Memorial Park Marikina City

"From darkness let the light shine!" Genesis 1:3

In Loving Memory
On the 3rd Death Anniversary of

Alexandra "Ria" P. Roque

on June 14, 2006

The Holy sacrifice of the Mass will be offered today at the following churches:

Chapel of St. Thomas More (Ateneo-Rockwell)	6:05 p.m.
Sacred Heart Parish, Kamuning	5:15 a.m.
National Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Makati City	6:00 a.m.
Nuestra Señora De Gracia Parish, Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City	6:00 a.m.
Immaculate Conception Parish, Antipolo Cathedral	6:00 a.m.
St. John Mary Vianney Parish, Antipolo City	6:00 a.m.
St. Jerome Emiliani & St. Susana Parish, Ayala Alabang Village	6:00 a.m.
San Agustin Chapel, Dasmariñas Village, Makati City	6:45 a.m.
St. Alphonsus Mary De Liguori Parish, Magallanes	7:00 a.m.
Christ the King Parish, Green Meadows, Quezon City	7:00 a.m.
Mary the Queen Parish, Greenhills	7:00 a.m.
Sta. Teresita Church, Kanlaon, Quezon City	7:00 a.m.
Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon Blvd., Quezon City	7:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Kanlaon, Quezon City	7:00 a.m.
Sanctuario De San Jose Greenhills, Mandaluyong City	7:15 a.m.
St. John Bosco Parish, Makati City	7:30 a.m.
Sancta Maria Stella Orientis Oratory	7:45 a.m.
Blessed Sacrament Fathers & Brothers (Sta. Cruz Church), Manila	8:00 a.m.
Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene, Quiapo, Manila	8:00 a.m.
Manila Metropolitan Cathedral-Basilica	12:10 p.m.
Sanctuario de San Antonio Parish, Forbes Park	12:15 p.m.
Shrine of Mary, Queen of Peace (Our Lady of Edsa), Quezon City	12:15 p.m.
San Agustin Church, Intramuros Manila	5:30 p.m.
Mount Carmel Shrine, Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
Parish of the Holy Sacrifice (U.P.) Diliman, Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
Sta. Maria Della Strada Parish, Katipunan Rd., Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
Saints Peter & Paul Parish	6:05 p.m.
St. John the Baptist Parish, Pinaglabanan St., San Juan	6:15 p.m.
St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, Bel-Air II, Makati City	6:30 p.m.
Parish of St. James the Great, Ayala Alabang Village	6:30 p.m.

Her family requests relatives and friends to remember her in their prayers.

God saw you getting tired, When a cure was not to be.
So he wrapped His arms around you, And whispered,
"Come to Me". You didn't deserve what you went through,
So He gave you rest.

JOCELYN GURANGO HIZON

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on June 13, 2006 at the age of 57.

Her loving husband, **Servando**; children **Cleo, Joseph** & **Avamarie**; grandchild **Zeus Felix**; mother **Patricia**; mother-in-law **Juliana**; brothers and sisters-in-law request the pious readers to pray for the family for we are sure that our beloved **Jocelyn** is now dwelling in the house of the Lord.

Her remains lie in state at the Jose Rizal Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park) Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Saturday, June 17, 2006 after the 10:00 a.m. Mass at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from Him;
He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is fortress,
I will never be shaken.

Psalm 62:1

THE CONGREGATION OF THE
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY (CICM)

requests your prayers for

REV. FR. GERARD BRAECKMAN, CICM

born in Lochristi, East Flanders, Belgium on May 22, 1931,
he died in Baguio City on June 12, 2006,
at the age of 75 years.

He was in charge of the Biology Laboratory of St. Louis University-Baguio City from 1967-1968. He was Dean of the College of Natural Sciences of the same University from 1968-1998. He was the Director of the Plant Propagation Laboratory of the same University from 1998 till the time of his death.

His remains lie in state at the Chapel of Home Sweet Home, Baguio City. Interment will be on Thursday, June 15, 2006, at the CICM Cemetery at the Maryhurst Seminary, Baguio City, after the 9:00 A.M. Mass of the Resurrection at Maryhurst Seminary Chapel, Baguio City.

PLEASE PRAY TO THE LORD FOR HIS ETERNAL REPOSE.

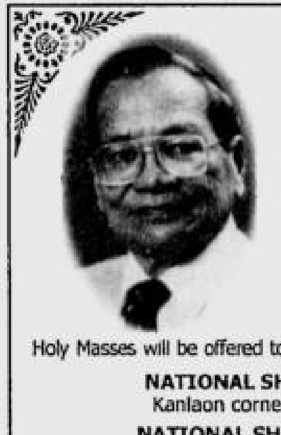
More Classified Ads on pages A15, A19, B2, B6 & B7

Message of Thanks

FEDERICO "FRITZ" VILLARIN MUNOZ

May 2, 1952 – May 22, 2006

His wife Amie, children and grandchildren, mother Josefina "Penny" Munoz, brother and sisters, wish to convey their heartfelt thanks to all who condoled with them in their hour of bereavement.



In Loving Memory on the
10th year Death Anniversary of

PEDRO "PETE" R. NARVASA

14 April 1928 – 14 June 1996

Holy Masses will be offered today at 6:00 in the evening in the following Churches:

NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES
Kanlaon corner N.S. Amoranto Streets, Quezon City
NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY
Sto. Domingo Church, # 537 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City
NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE SACRED HEART
#4 Sacred Heart Street corner Kamagong, San Antonio Village, Makati City
ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH
A. Arnaiz Avenue corner Amorsolo Street, Makati City
ST. ALFONSUS MARY DE LIGUORI PARISH CHURCH
Humabos Place, Magallanes Village, Makati City
ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE PARISH CHURCH
N. Garcia corner Neptune Streets, Bel-Air II, Makati City

His family kindly requests all readers to remember him in their prayers.

SMIC absorbs supermarkets

Share swap valued at ₱13B

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SM INVESTMENTS Corp. of taipan Henry Sy Sr. will absorb its supermarket and hypermarket businesses through a share swap deal valued at roughly P12.5-P13 billion.

SMIC executive vice president Jose Sio said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that SMIC has agreed to transfer 56 million shares, representing around 9.6 percent of its expanded capital stock, to supermarket chain Supervalue Inc. (SM Supermarkets) and hypermarket operator Super Shopping Markets Inc. (SM Hypermarkets).

In return, SMIC will get 100 percent of SM Supermarkets and 81 percent of SM Hypermarkets.

The remaining 19 percent in SM Hypermarkets is held by SM Supermarkets.

SMIC acquired these key retail formats to boost the value of its shares and expand retail revenues.

Once folded into SMIC, these retail operations are expected to contribute P1.1 billion in additional income to the holding firm.

A hypermarket refers to retail outlets around 10,000 square meters in floor size that combine a wet market, supermarket and discount store.

The SM Group runs five hypermarkets in Metro Manila and one each in Marilao, Bulacan and Molino, Cavite.

SM plans to open at least four more hypermarkets this year, at Mall of Asia along the Manila Bay area, SM Clark in Pampanga, Frontera Verde along C5 near the Tiendesitas market, and at North Edsa beside SM City.

A supermarket, on the other hand, are smaller outlets with an average floor space of 8,000 square meters.

The SM Group currently operates 25 supermarkets and will open two to three more this year.

SMIC was earlier in talks with the Fung Family of United Supermarket Group for the latter to buy its shares in the supermarket and hypermarket businesses.

Aside from retail, SMIC has interests in banking and financial services, real estate development and tourism.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 13, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		FINANCIAL			
		BANKS			
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	2,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	33	33	30.5	32.5	458,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	49	49	48	48	2,435,400
China Banking Corp.	870	870	870	870	120
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.5	20.25	20.5	900
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.39	2,100,000
Equitable Pci Bank Inc.	72	73	72	72.5	118,800
International Exch. Bank	41	41	41	41	58,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32.5	32.5	30.5	31.5	1,345,100
Philippine National Bank	31	31	31	31	32,700
Phil. Savings Bank	39	39	39	39	7,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	17.5	17.5	17.25	17.25	48,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	44	44	43.5	44	15,000
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS			
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	5,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1720	1720	1720	1720	30
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	300,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2130	2170	2120	2170	1,450
Ivantage Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.12	1.12	592,000
		INDUSTRIAL			
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER			
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	41	42	40.5	42	550,600
Manila Electric Co. A	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	1,400
Manila Electric Co. B	21.25	21.25	20.5	20.75	1,333,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.8	1,835,000
Petron Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.6	13,451,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	20,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	80,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO			
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23	22.75	23	40,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	33.5	34.5	33.5	34	418,400
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	16	16	16	16	19,700
Pancake House Inc.	3.9	4.05	3.9	4.05	79,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.65	2.6	2.65	841,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63	64	63	64	150,300
San Miguel Corp. B	69	71	69	70.5	199,700
Universal Robina Corp	19	19	18.75	18.75	847,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.215	220,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES			
Southeast Asian Cement	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	1,470,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.1	1.1	2,060,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.55	4.55	200,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	49,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.0725	.0.07	0.07	3,500,000
		HOLDING FIRMS			
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	20,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	10,000,000
Ayala Corp.	350	352.5	347.5	350	380,040
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	36,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.022	12,400,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.6	3.7	3.45	3.5	1,628,000
APC Group Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.17	0.17	3,800,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	63,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.84	0.9	0.84	0.9	390,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.42	1.44	1.42	1.42	75,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.9	9.9	9.9	9.9	27,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.99	3,320,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.75	3.6	3.75	72,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.85	3	2.85	3	27,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6	1,040,000
Keppel Holdings	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	50,000
Medco Holdings	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	300,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	300,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.16	0.165	0.16	0.165	1,200,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	50,000
SM Investments Corp.	215	215	210	210	215,550
		PROPERTY			
Ayala Land Inc.	11.5	12	11.5	11.75	31,277,100
Belle Corp.	1	1	1	1	3,845,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	9,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	1,480,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	204,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	140,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.57	15,570,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.34	1.36	1.32	1.36	1,551,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	500,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	130,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.44	1.46	1.42	1.44	27,056,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.195	0.2	0.195	0.2	5,390,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.5	229,500
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	580,000
SM Development Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	66,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.3	7	7.1	11,873,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	80,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.07	0.07	0.065	0.065	1,700,000
		MEDIA			
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.25	14.25	14	14	56,700
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.16	1.18	1.14	1.18	396,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	855	885	840	885	103,720
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.15	3.3	849,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1880	1880	1860	1865	276,740
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	640,000
Ionics Inc.	2.42	2.46	2.16	2.16	547,000
IPVG Corp.	2	2	2	2	20,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	2,000
Transpacific Broadband	1.36	1.4	1.36	1.4	110,000
Philweb Corp.	0.03	0.03	0.028	0.029	217,800,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	3,370,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.5	13.75	13.25	13.5	3,858,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE			
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	4.45	4.45	4.45	4.45	255,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.36	1.36	244,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	112,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	5,756,000
		EDUCATION			
iPeople Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	50,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES			
Macroasia Corp.	1.88	1.9	1.84	1.84	52,000
Paxys Inc.	10	10.25	10	10	319,300
		MINING			
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	35,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6	6	5.9	5.9	793,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	6,740,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	2,310,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.02	0.02	0.018	0.018	93,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	37,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	469,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	2.9	2.9	2.75	2.9	23,070,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.9	3	2.85	3	15,769,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27	27	26.5	27	1,042,600
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.27	3,650,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.41	0.46	0.41	0.46	610,000
		OIL			
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	1,300,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	383,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	94,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.04	1.04	0.98	0.99	536,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.06	1.06	1	1	293,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	15	15.5	14.5	15.25	387,100
		PREFERRED			
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,500
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,100
		WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.			
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	14.5	14.75	14	14	525,000

DISCLOSURES

RIZALINO S. Navarro, Perry Y. Uy, Roberto Jose L. Castillo, Helen Y. Dee, Samson C. Lazo and Ernesto S. de Castro were elected directors of **EEI Corp.** last June 9. Elected independent directors were Roberto F. de Ocampo, Teodoro Q. Peña and Wilfrido E. Sanchez.

* * *

THE BOARD of directors of **Empire East Land Holdings Inc.** re-elected Andrew L. Tan as chairman and Gerardo C. Garcia as vice chairman yesterday.

* * *

SOUTH China Resources Inc. has disclosed the re-election of Edgardo P. Reyes, Wilfrido P. Reyes, Belen R. Castro and Francisco M. Ortigas III as directors of the company. Felipe U. Yap, on the other hand, has been re-elected as an independent director. Meanwhile, Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co. has been re-appointed as external auditor for 2006. ***Compiled by Kate Pedroso, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

June 13, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.794218	1.000000	53.1980
Japan	Yen	0.006947	0.008747	0.4653
United Kingdom	Pound	1.463903	1.843200	98.0546
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.102336	0.128851	6.8546
Switzerland	Franc	0.643978	0.810833	43.1347
Canada	Dollar	0.722673	0.909918	48.4058
Singapore	Dollar	0.498036	0.627077	33.3592
Australia	Dollar	0.593675	0.747496	39.7653
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.107853	2.653998	141.1874
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.211774	0.266645	14.1850
Brunei	Dollar	0.496479	0.625117	33.2550
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000106	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.020672	0.026028	1.3846
UAE	Dirham	0.216237	0.272264	14.4839
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.259100	66.9816
ArgentinaPeso	0.257863	0.324675	17.2721	
Brazil	Real	0.349953	0.440626	23.4404
Denmark	Kroner	0.134188	0.168956	8.9881
India	Rupee	0.017375	0.021877	1.1638
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216173	0.272183	14.4796
Mexico	New Peso	0.069425	0.087413	4.6502
New Zealand	Dollar	0.500106	0.629683	33.4979
Norway	Kroner	0.128492	0.161784	8.6066
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013215	0.016639	0.8852
South Africa	Rand	0.117644	0.148126	7.8800
Korea	Won	0.000830	0.001045	0.0556
Sweden	Kroner	0.108141	0.136160	7.2434
Syria	Pound	0.015300	0.019264	1.0248
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024433	0.030764	1.6366
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000370	0.000466	0.0248

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Cigarette firm's program boosts earnings of upland farmers

Resuscitating the dying tobacco industry

By Christine A. Gaylican

TUBA, BENGUET—THE SEARCH FOR full-flavored tobacco leaves with lower nicotine content has brought a team from cigarette manufacturer Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc. to the hinterlands of this province.

Tobacco grown in the lowlands suffers from poor quality because of higher soil salinity and "unacceptable farm management practices," according to Philip Morris's contracted domestic leaf buyer Trans-Manila Inc.

"Farmers in Ilocos and Pangasinan were rampantly using unacceptable farm management practices such as the improper use of inorganic fertilizers, particularly chlorine-based commercial fertilizer varieties," explains Trans-Manila Inc.'s vice president Matthew Diong in an interview.

This has brought down the quality of Philippine tobacco to mere "fillers" for cigarettes locally manufactured by Philip Morris.

"This was heartbreaking for tobacco farmers in the lower plains because tobacco has been grown in the Philippines since the Spanish colonial period in the 18th century," Diong notes.

To revive the local tobacco industry, Trans-Manila and Philip Morris started a project meant to upgrade the "agronomic skills" of upland vegetable farmers in planting tobacco.

Upland farming

Combined efforts of international agronomists from Philip Morris, Trans-Manila and local agriculturists from the National Tobacco Administration (NTA) and the Benguet provincial agriculture office gave birth to the idea of growing tobacco in upland areas.

Diong said their technical team has devised a scheme for growing tobacco in the mountains, particularly in Benguet, after extensive research to determine suitable crop management practices on the hilly terrain.

STUDY shows RP can grow the kind of high-quality tobacco leaf that Brazil produces also in its upland areas.

Results of soil tests and other research on growing tobacco in the highlands were encouraging enough to justify the establishment of a tobacco training center in the area.

"We found a way to resuscitate the ailing local tobacco production sector," Diong recalls. "The results show that we could grow the kind of high-quality export tobacco leaf that Brazil produces also in their upland areas."

"The weather here, the soil conditions, the temperature are suitable for tobacco farming," he added. "The next step for us was to convince the vegetable farmers to grow tobacco, which was not too difficult under the circumstances."

The first beneficiaries of the training school were Ibaloi farmers who knew nothing about tobacco farming.

Today many of them are also teaching other farmers the proper way of growing upland tobacco.

"Planting tobacco is not easy," says Manolo Mat-an, a local beneficiary of the program. "It's more challenging compared to planting crops like Baguio beans and carrots, but we are realizing good incomes and we intend to continue planting it and use it also as a hedge to keep prices of vegetables profitable for us."

Mat-an notes that the high quality tobacco leaves they harvest command a price of P50 to P70 per kilo, compared to the low-grade tobacco that they used to sell for P20 to P30 per kilo.

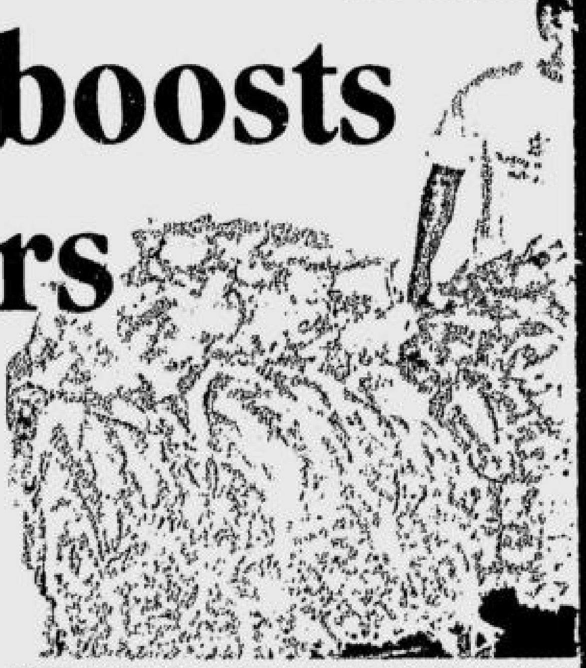
This encouraged other farmers to join the training program.

Orienting farmers

Last month, another set of 50 farmers from nearby Trinidad and various villages around the province completed six months of training on tobacco growing, making them the third group of vegetable growers to graduate from the country's first tobacco training center.

DIONG with newly harvested tobacco leaves

During the training, farmers are oriented about the advantages of growing better varieties of full-flavored tobacco, which have lower nicotine content and higher sugar content, making them more aromatic.


HIGH grade tobacco leaves from upland farms produ
sweeten taste of cigarettes

"The varieties planted upland are far superior to the filler-tobacco varieties grown in the lowlands and can fetch premium prices," notes Diong.

At the same time, agronomists emphasize to farmers the importance of producing quality tobacco using more environment-friendly farm practices.

They are taught the latest techniques in preparing seed beds, transplanting the seedlings as well as curing and classifying leaves. They are also taught how to construct a cost-effective curing barn.

One of the critical components of the training program is the Tobacco Identity Preservation Program (TIPP), which essentially advocates the planting only of certified tobacco seeds and absolutely discourages the use of all genetically modified tobacco seeds, if these are available.

Under the TIPP, farmers are taught not to repeat the bad practices of lowland farms, which led to the deterioration of tobacco quality.

After the first year of the project, about 40 tons of tobacco were harvested from the pilot farms. This doubled to 80 tons in 2005.

This year, production is projected to be even higher
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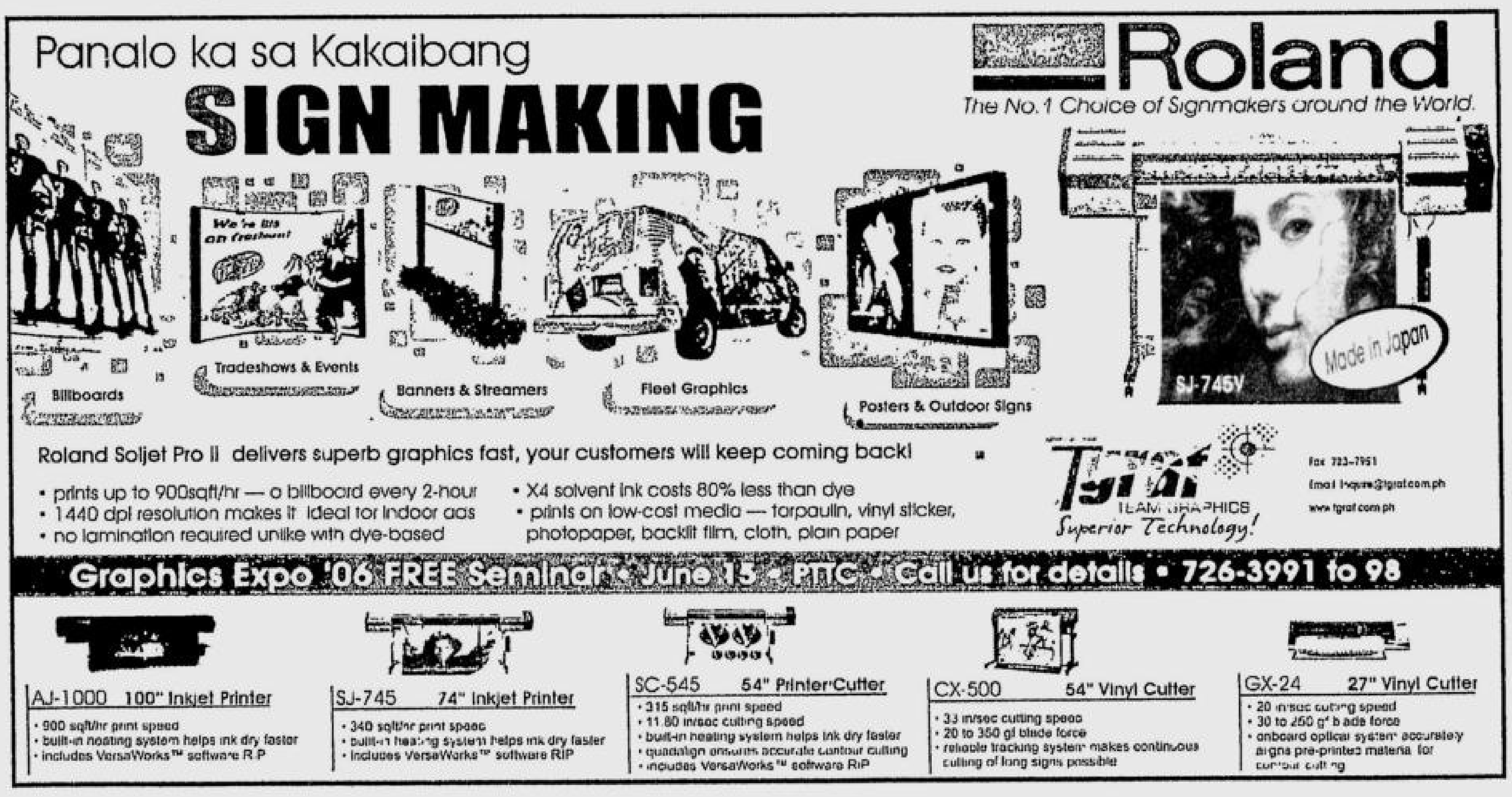
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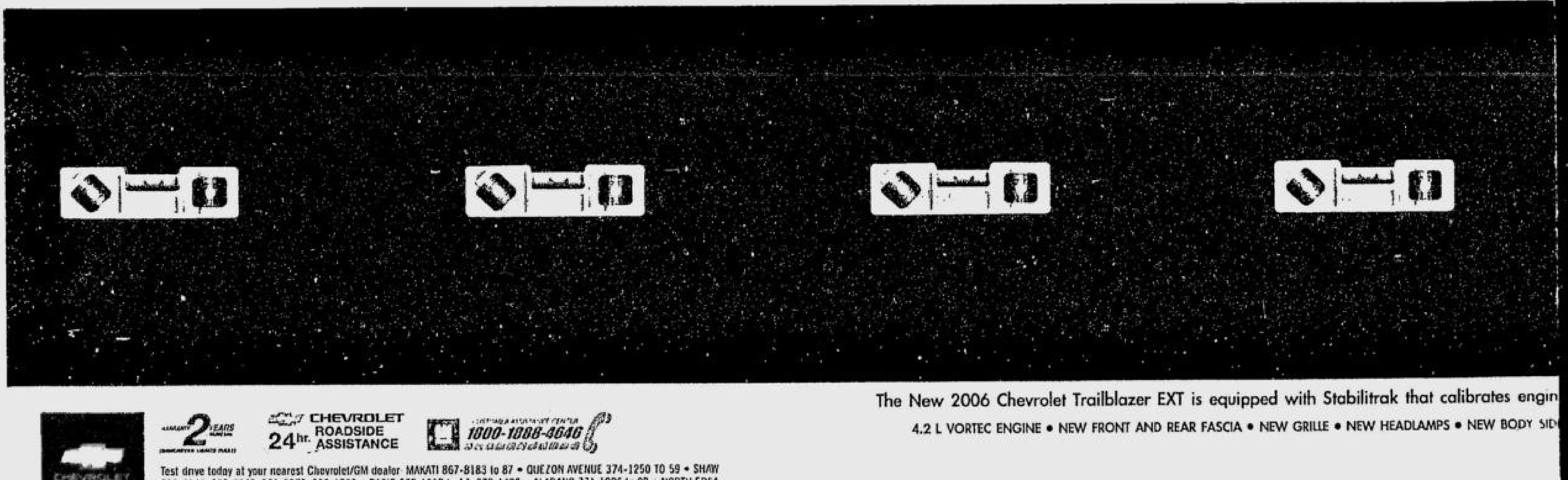
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ce low nicotine and

with more farmers going farming as a profitable al- p:.

the support of the gov- ie private sector, and the emselves, this training ecome a success," said ris managing director n during the program's rites.

g partnership

iat the tobacco company tted to buy all of the duce that meet its quality Jelson said, "It is this part- ch will allow the produc- quality tobacco in the

so very impressed with the pland tobacco grown here d farmers Philip Morris will narket for their products if e to commit to good agri- tices.

ot telling farmers that to- ke over vegetable farming source of income, but we em that they could plant a ommercial alternative crop llow them to raise their in- have a steady livelihood he year," Nelson said.

to Diong, this continuing mong government author- ate sector and the farmers iat the local tobacco indus- ve the challenges facing it. ippine tobacco industry] is dustry as widely perceived dergoing a very positive on," he notes. "Farmers are ow important quality is."

cktales

ge B3

hotels are still charging 2,000 per night, at par or gher than similar class ho- Metro Manila.

h is strange, since Baguio ave lower labor costs and n bills to worry about.

IE BAGUIO vacation home mily of Manuel L. Quezon arda Road is being torn o give way to a mixed-use nium, The Burnham The property has long been d by businessman Henry G. 10 was in the news lately in ion with his leasehold fight Semirara Coal Corp.

through the grapevine

is undergoing yet another tting, with top ABS-CBN rs being encouraged to lk shows and, vice versa, k show hosts being encour- go out and develop their nd report from the field.

il: *cocktales_pdi@pldtd- cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)*

Bernanke Blues

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

THIS WEEK, I SIGNED ON FOR A FOURTH year to write the MR. BEARBULL column, so I guess some people still read it. Anyway, the INQUIRER is very worried about the number of journalists getting killed so from now on, all reporters and columnists have to agree to wear a wrap-around KEVLAR bullet-proof vest, day and night.

Have you every tried taking a shower in a bullet-proof vest? It's awful, and as for love-making, forget it.

I also had to choose between having a 6'5" bodyguard with me constantly or carrying a gun. I chose the latter so they offered me an UZI sub-machine gun, a GLOCK or a SIG SAUER.

As I have never handled a gun in my life, I had to decide between a GLOCK, to tell the time, or a SIG SAUER, which I presume, was a Filipino version of the German sauerkraut. In the end, I chose a bazooka and I can destroy a tank from 100 yards. I am an excellent marksman. I excelled at triggernometry.

An old married couple of 50 years were having breakfast together. Suddenly, the old man said, "It's our golden wedding anniversary. Let's pretend we are newly-weds," and they stripped to the waist.

The old woman said, "Do you know my nipples feel just as hot for you as they did 50 years ago." "I am not surprised, said the old man. "One is in your coffee and the other in your oatmeal."

* * *

In 1988, Neil Simon wrote a famous play called BILOXI BLUES. I have simply updated it to bring it in line with current events. Poor BERNANKE, he took over from GREENSPAN as FEDERAL RESERVE chair at a time when he is faced with a near-impossible task.

On the one hand, the economy appears to be slowing, but not too much should be read into one month's data. On the other, the three-month and six-month readings have "reached a level that, if sustained, would be at or above the upper end of the range that many economists, including myself, would consider consistent with price stability and the promotion of the long-run growth."

In simple English, the inflation rate is too high.

He continued: "The FED will be vigilant to ensure that the recent pattern of elevated monthly core inflation readings is not sustained. The FED must continue to resist any tendency for increases in energy and commodity prices to become permanently embedded in core inflation."

Traders are betting that the chance of a further rate increase on June 29 is 84 percent.

I am not an economist, but I agree with MARC FABER that it is ridiculous to calculate inflation to exclude food and energy. Do Americans not eat or travel?

When I was at school, inflation was the rate at which goods and services increased by annually, or how much your money decreased by, in terms of what it would buy. If we add in food and energy, then according to DR. FABER, the inflation rate in the US is 6-7 percent, the same as here.

The economic health of the US is vitally important for all countries, especially Asia, where the US is the main trading partner.

For that reason, the Morgan Stanley Capital International Emerging Markets Index had its biggest fall since last December, wiping out all this year's gains. The biggest fall occurred in India where the SENSEX has fallen 22 percent since the May 8 high, when I told everybody to SELL.

However, to put it in perspective, the SENSEX had risen 66 percent in seven months, so the correction represents only one-third of the gain.

In the PHISIX, the correction of 19 percent was half of the 35 percent rise, but other countries fared worse. Thailand lost 90 percent of its 16-percent rise and Singapore 60 percent of its 21 percent gain. Generally speaking, the more indexes rose, the more they corrected with Indonesia coming off best, but as it has an inflation rate of 15.6 percent, its economy can hardly be considered healthy.

For the moment, the PHISIX is hovering just above an important support level and the risk factor is in single digits so the downside seems limited.

I have even suggested a few stocks that subscribers could accumulate. There could be a technical rally quite soon but I doubt that fund managers' perception of risk in emerging markets has suddenly evaporated so I would expect them to sell into the rallies.

This means that the high of 2602 points might not be seen again for some time.

Everything depends on what BERNANKE says, not does. We expect another rate increase and that has been factored into the market with the DOW falling below 11,000.

If he says, "I have done enough for now," all markets will rally rapidly. But if he continues to indicate further rate increases, as seems likely, the decline will continue. There is nothing the stock market hates more than uncertainty.

It is better to receive bad news than wait for the other shoe to drop.

I received a lot of e-mail from people who bought UITs from the banks, who apparently sold P300 billion worth. These investors are now suffering an unexpected loss of capital and are asking me whether to sell.

Six weeks ago, I wrote in the newsletter that the interest rate cycle had bottomed and that holders of bonds, five years or longer, should SELL them.

Unfortunately, only a few people read the newsletter and I could not write it in the INQUIRER since it was the day after my writing day. The 11 ¾ percent bonds 2013, which are very widely held, yield 11.3 percent gross.

I cannot see them falling much further so I certainly would not take a loss on UITs now. The banks like to offer new products such as these to the public but they do not tell them when to SELL.

On Thursday, it was rumored that the government would sell another $1 billion global bonds in the second half of the year. This has been denied but is probably true. It is fortunate that $2 billion worth of dollar and euro-bonds were sold in the first half at favorable prices because the next auction will be far more difficult and lenders will demand a substantially higher return.

The Treasury will reject bids for as long as they can but eventually, they will have to give much higher yields to the banks. So keep your money on short-term deposit and roll it over every month for the time being.

mrbearbull@hotmail.com

PNOC
PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tel No. 893-1320, Local 5281/5282

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Various Carbon Steel Pipes	**Approved Budget**
Under FGJ 60820	PHP 96,49[illegible] 050.00
Under FGJ 60821	PHP 3,770,000.00
Various Sizes of Expanding Gate Valves	**Approved Budget**
Under FGT 53721	PHP 1,437,000.00
Under FGT 53766	PHP 8,162,000.00
Under FGT 53767	PHP 3,440,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o Harold T. Fontillas (CS Pipes) and Marta Cristina Lynn M. Mercado (Gate Valves) starting June 14, 2006, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on June 22, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter, dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock Time) of July 6, 2006 for FGT 53721 / FGT 53766-67 (Various Gate Valves) and July 13, 2006 for FGJ 60820-21 (Various CS Pipes). Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bis should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI—June 14 & 21, 2006)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
PNOC
Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO, Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors, with successful experience as primary contractor in the execution of at least three (3) piping insulation and cladding projects within the last ten (10) years, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

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EDC 05-188-1

The Approved Budget is PhP 8,057,310.00 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 90 calendar days.

Application forms for eligibility and bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o Raymond Sison local 5134) starting June 8, 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: One Thousand (PhP 1,000.00).

Site inspection is on June 22, 2006 at the Leyte Geothermal Production Field in Ormoc, Leyte. For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held immediately after the site inspection at the Admin Conference Room, Leyte Geothermal Production Field, Ormoc, Leyte.

The application for eligibility, letter of intent and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, First Floor, Building V, PNOC-EDC, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of July 5, 2006 and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committe

(PDI-June 14, 2006)

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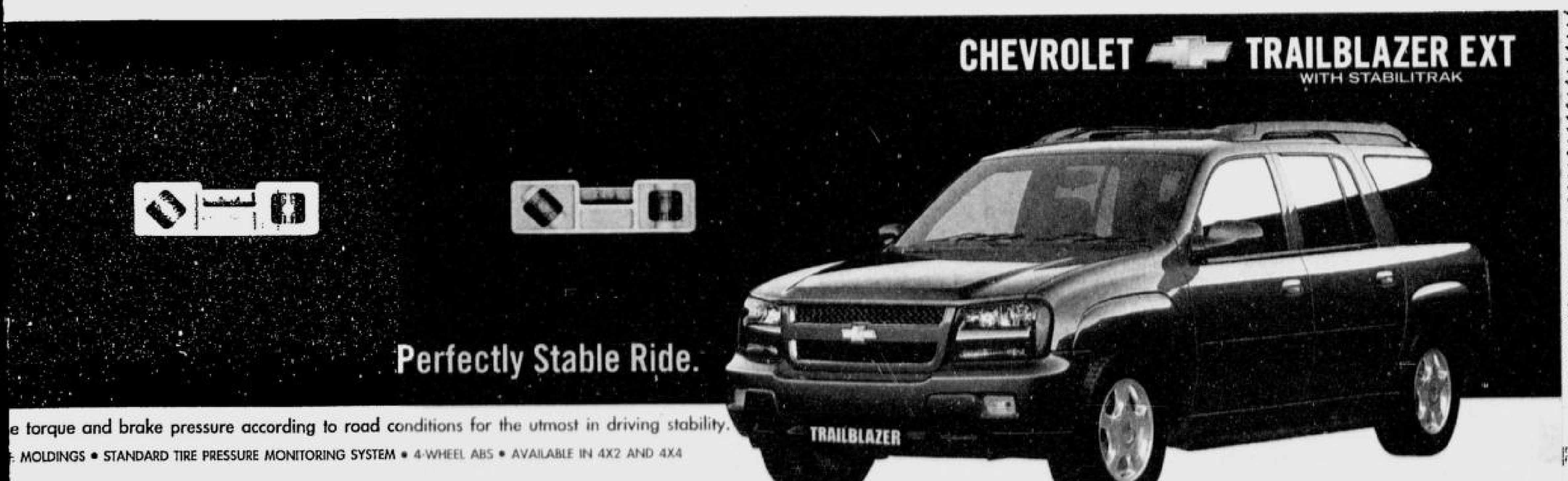
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RIDERS representing the six participating countries gather around their most trusted motorbike.

Yamaha Pan-Asean Touring ends in San Juan

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

AFTER COVERING SOME 15,000 kilometers of varied road surfaces through six Southeast Asian countries the Yamaha Pan-Asean Touring has finally ended amid pomp and fanfare at the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan last month.

But for the organizers, the touring's conclusion is just the beginning of a long road ahead. As a matter of fact, all the 16 motorcycles—the Sniper 135—used throughout the touring will be shipped back to Japan where Yamaha engineers will take them apart for further study.

"Perhaps, their studies will result in the development of a next-generation model or a basis for refining another model. But whatever the reasons, what is certain is that Yamaha is continuously researching to come up with a perfect motorbike, that is, one that people would want to ride in, is reliable, requires less maintenance, and gives a satisfying ride experience," explained Manuel Gaspar Albos, Norkis Yamaha SVP for marketing.

Hands full

And Yamaha engineers in Japan will have enough data on what the 16 motorbikes have experienced and endured during its six-nation sojourn totaling 72 days of motorbike riding or approximately 14,310 km of road covered.

The Pan-Asean Touring started in Indonesia (from Nov. 20 to Dec. 10, 2005) then went on to Thailand (Jan. 14-29), then Malaysia and Singapore (Feb. 27-March 8), Vietnam (April 1-15) and finally to the Philippines (May 17 to 27).

For the Philippine leg, the caravan visited the provinces of Cebu, Leyte, Samar, Sorsogon, Albay, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, Quezon, Batangas, Cavite, Pampanga, Bataan, Zambales, Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Sur, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan before culminating in San Juan.

"The Pan-Asean Touring is organized not only to promote the Yamaha image or the latest moped model but also to enable the participants (each country is represented by two riders) to experience the so-called motorbike culture of each country," said Albos.

Albos added that while the Philippines is yet to achieve a motorbike population that other countries like Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam enjoy, he believes it's only a matter of time before the country's motorbike industry starts picking up.

Tremendous interest

"We are already experiencing tremendous interest. With the introduction of the Sniper 135, we hope to trigger a boom in the market. Besides, this model is well researched and has several features that appeals to people who are yet to be convinced about riding a motorbike," said Albos.

The Sniper 135 is a four-stroke, 135 cc single-cylinder underbone model that employs a liquid-cooling system on its engine. The first time for a Yamaha moped to be equipped with such, the liquid-cooling system provides a more stable power output during extended high-speed or in hill climbing plus lower vibration and noise.

ACTOR Gary Estrada is among the riders

The new Yamaha model uses a DiAsil cylinder, which is made of aluminum alloy containing 20 percent silicon. This makes the Sniper 135's cylinder more durable, lighter and more resistance to heat, thus eliminating the need for costly maintenance (like sleeve replacement), reducing engine oil consumption and improving fuel economy.

Another important feature of the Sniper 135 its sporty-type muffler equipped with a multi-tube catalyzer to clean the motorbike's exhaust by reburning any unburned fuel in the exhaust pipe. The exhaust that has been cleaned once in this way is then cleaned anew in the muffler by a catalytic converter function resulting in much more cleaner emissions.

"Being the last stop of this six-country touring, I am in a better position to say that the Sniper 135 is one tough machine that has endured all the tests thrown at it. And with all these outstanding features, I am sure future owners of the Spark 135 will agree with me," said Albos.

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

DUE TO SPACE LIMITATIONS, Andre Palma's column will appear next week.

LTFRB's plans will affect all road users

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

A LOT OF MOTORISTS THINK THAT THE POLICIES of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) have an impact only on public transport drivers and operators. But if LTFRB chair Ma. Elena H. Bautista has her way, the LTFRB will have an impact on all road users—drivers (both public and private), cyclists, pedestrians, the elderly, the handicapped and schoolchildren—in terms of road safety.

The youngest chairperson that the LTFRB has ever had presented her reform programs for June 2006-June 2007 at the 5th Road Safety Conference jointly convened last Thursday by the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP, formerly the Philippine Motor Association) and University of the Philippines National Center for Transportation Studies (UP-NCTS) with Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. as sponsor.

Two years after assuming the LTFRB's top post, Ms Bautista is proving to be tougher than what hard-nosed businessmen in the public transportation industry expected. They might have been misled by her appearance as she looks like any other pretty, slim and pleasant single woman in her 30s.

Road accidents

Which she is, until it comes to preventing or minimizing road accidents involving public utility vehicles (PUVs) that injure or kill not only the passengers, but often also other motorists and/or pedestrians. Noting that PUV operators always blame the driver when an accident occurs, Ms Bautista conferred with bus, taxi and jeepney operators and urged them to hire only responsible professional drivers.

This was when establishing a Land Transport Drivers and Operators Academy was suggested by the operators. The academy will promote continuing professional drivers' education to upgrade road safety skills, defensive driving habits and road courtesy. All applicants for a professional driver's license will have to undergo a seminar at the academy and will be made to drive all sorts of vehicles: a taxicab, jeepney, van and bus. No pro driver will be hired by land transport operators unless he has a certificate from the academy.

At the same time, the LTFRB will set up a database of the records of drivers so that those who have had frequent accidents will be blacklisted and cannot transfer from one operator to another after an accident. The academy will also remind and update operators on their responsibilities and obligations.

Targeting

The LTFRB has signed a memo of agreement with Insurance Management Groups (Pami/Unitrans) for an initial funding of P5 million to start the academy. Ms Bautista said she is targeting January 2007 to open the academy in Metro Manila with branches in Cebu and Davao.

Aside from the academy, Ms Bautista plans to monitor the compliance of terminals, garages, transfer stations and other critical transport facilities with road safety and security standards. The LTFRB will inspect these to see whether PUVs are checked before going out to ply their routes. A comprehensive preventive maintenance schedule/plan for buses will be coordinated with the Truck Manufacturers' Association of the Philippines while a comprehensive maintenance plan for taxicabs, AUVs and vans in coordination with AAP and the Safety Organization of the Philippines Inc. is being explored by the LTFRB. Will this result in less accidents due to failing brakes?

Other components of the monitoring program are the mandatory Land Transportation Office-MVIS certification for all buses plying Edsa and a road safety advocacy program for public transport workers.

Accident response

In addition, Ms Bautista wants to organize a Passenger Rights and Accident Response Action Plan whereby any person who witnesses an accident involving a PUV can call a 24/7 hotline (886-6000) for assistance. The LTFRB will dispatch an ambulance for the victims at no cost to them. An accident insurance program with additional benefits such as All Risk-No Fault, Automatic Hospitalization and Payment within five days will be implemented.

Corollary to this, the LTFRB plans to enforce the compliance of PUVs with the requirement to have emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, two-way radio, stretchers, neck/spine braces and other medical paraphernalia. Transport workers will be trained for on-board fire-fighting, first aid, CPR and other emergency interventions.

Terrorists who plant bombs in PUVs are another concern that the LTFRB hopes to address with a $100,000 project grant from the Apec (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation). Ms Bautista proposes a Land International Security and Commuters Advocacy Protocol involving a codified compendium of public land transport security and counterterrorism "Best Practices" and a commuters' advocacy campaign on core elements of counterterrorism/safety for public land transport.

Bottom line, the LTFRB chair's road safety plans, difficult to achieve as they may seem, deserve the support and cooperation of all road users.

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Al Mendoza

ONDO AGUA. NEVER HEARD?

OK, how about Honda Bay?

To the sons and daughters of Mayor Hagedorn's Puerto Princesa in Palawan, Ondo Agua is history.

But today, Honda Bay is on their lips almost every day of the year. That's the first thing a visitor of Puerto Princesa would notice.

Honda Bay is present and Ondo Agua is past.

Ondo Agua is the old name of Honda Bay.

The Japanese caused the change in name.

Ah, Japan has become an indelible part of Filipino life—from kamikaze to sashimi, from wars to cars, and yes, from dahon to Honda.

Many, many years ago, Palawan knew Ondo Agua as that deepest portion of their sea. Literally, Ondo Agua means deep water.

From atop hills, people marveled at the majestic sight that is Ondo Agua/Honda Bay: calm, blue waters from afar. As it was a must-see for tourists then, it still is today. You can enjoy its breathtaking view from just the peripheries of the city—from the highway, hills and valleys.

We talk of tourists, the Japanese always come to mind, if not first.

The visiting Japanese in the olden days encountered problems on pronunciation. Not surprisingly, they found Ondo Agua a tongue-twister.

Continuous mispronunciation of Ondo Agua led to its rebirth, if not rechristening.

Soon, Ondo Agua became Honda Agua—simply because Honda is a byword in Japan.

Not long after, Ondo Agua became Honda Bay.

The rest, as we love to say, is history.

It is to the credit of Arnel Doria, TinTin Reyes and Sheryl delos Santos that Honda Cars Philippines has found it fitting to ship 5 Civics to Puerto Princesa a while back.

No, the 5 Honda Civics weren't being sold to Palawanons at bargain prices. Far from that, although one can see the Civic and City—not to mention the CR-V—cruising the city every now and then.

The 5 fresh-from-the-assembly-lines Civics were brought to Puerto Princesa for a unique mission: Have them test-driven on a 34-km cemented stretch by motoring journalists (who else?)—imported from Manila.

Suddenly, Honda Cars Philippines was not only being environment-friendly.

It is also rediscovering the beauty of nature this side of Palawan.

Suddenly, Honda Cars Philippines was not only being heritage conscious.

It is also paying tribute to a historical landmark that it can truly call its own: Ondo Agua/Honda Bay.

Suddenly, Honda Cars Philippines was not only helping the country sell its ethnic beauty.

It is also creating a cultural awareness that is badly needed in a country sorely in need of strengthening its self-identity.

Armin Amio of Gadgets Mag was right. When someone asked her what she thought about the new Civic as she was pushing the uncomplaining Civic to 140 kph in a straightaway from a zigzag break in Salvacion town, she said, "Oh, that? Well, as much as I love the drive of this magnificent Civic, I love Palawan that much, too. I've been here many times but I'll never get tired coming back."

Arnel Doria, seated at the back could only smile. He knew he was "mission accomplished"—as did TinTin and Sheryl.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Under cover of darkness, the men in blue of the MMDA continue to rake it in at the corner of Edsa and Quezon Avenue, going UP side coming from GMA-7. Paging, Chair Fernando.

* * *

Send comments to menju@pldtdsl.net.

PSBank AutoLOAN
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Lydia Leaño, has more than one hundred reasons to smile these days. One million, to be exact. The one million pesos grand prize she won in the joint PSBank and Metrobank *Fast Car, Fast Cash Auto Loan* promo.

For Mommy Lydia, this is not the first time for her to experience the simplicity and speed of applying for a PSBank Auto Loan as she already had two previous auto loan accounts with the bank: one in 1999 and another in 2000. Early this year when she needed a car for her business, Mommy Lydia called Ms. Des Inabangan, manager of the branch where she has her account, applied for another auto loan in January, and drove home with her Toyota Vios a few weeks after. Delighted with PSBank's service, she got another loan the following month, and two more in March. Little did she know that the same speed she got her approvals would also be her fast track ticket to the P1 million cash prize.

"Would you believe all my loan applications were approved the same day I applied? PSBank auto loan is so hassle-free that I did not consider any other bank for my auto financing needs. My good relationship with the branch manager where I have my account with, also made auto loan application a pleasant experience for me," Mommy Lydia said.

PSBank's quick application processing is guaranteed with the use of its Automated Loan Application Processing System. This allows for prompt credit decisions that can be obtained in as fast as 3 hours-faster than most banks. This system also allows PSBank to send SMS alerts to clients as soon as their application has been approved.

"Initially, I thought Ms. Des, my branch manager, was just kidding when she broke the good news. I know there was an ongoing raffle promo but I did not set my hopes up since I haven't won in a raffle promo before," she admitted.

Mommy Lydia plans to share a big part of her prize to people who have been good to her family, as well as to the Church. In fact, she donated a part of her money to sponsor a church activity this summer. "My two children have good family lives already. Now is the time to help others, too," she added.

Mommy Lydia said this is not the first time she applied for an auto loan. But surely, this is the first time she took home a car with one million pesos. Now that's more than what anyone can ask for, thanks to PSBank.

Will your new car come with P1,000,000?
Fast Car, Fast Cash
Apply Now.

Info exchange on trade pact negotiations urged

Favila says best practices need to be adopted

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COoperation should continue to allow the free flow of information on the best way to negotiate trade pacts amid fears that such agreements might stunt the growth of developing members, according to Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila.

Favila, who recently met with counterparts at the Apec in Vietnam, said best practices in trade talks needed to be disseminated and adopted, especially with ongoing talks on various bilateral and regional trade pacts.

"I am particularly concerned that the spaghetti bowl effect (or having the world markets divided into numerous units through various separate pacts) may damage the growth of smaller players in the region," he said.

Further, the trade chief said the separate talks could undermine efforts to conclude a new round of talks in the World Trade Organization.

He said building on best practices within Apec could easily gather momentum since the group had adopted this means as a way to ensure that pacts outside WTO would be consistent with the aims of the WTO.

"But I can imagine that senior officials will have some challenging work here because we each have different experiences, motivations and capabilities which we all want to be reflected in the model measures," he said.

Still, he added that the Philippines welcomed the formulation of model measures to guide Apec members in future negotiations and to promote high quality agreements consistent with the WTO process.

"Model provisions are guides for members but should not prejudice ongoing negotiations nor be prescriptive to future negotiations entered into by the members," Favila said.

"By maintaining the nonbinding principle of Apec, possible conflict of interest among members who are negotiating with each other will be avoided," he added.

Also, Favila urged Apec to continue providing members with capacity-building aid on how to effectively negotiate bilateral or regional trade pacts.

"Apec should as well look into commissioning analytical research to better understand and analyze the impact and benefits that separate pacts might impose on both the welfare of the region and the achievement of Apec's goals," he said.

Gov't to get ₱650M from Mimosa deal

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—THE government stands to recover at least P650 million in arrears from the recently concluded privatization of the Mimosa Leisure Estate here, according to Clark Development Corp.

CDC president Antonio Ng said P500 million of the expected amount represents unpaid leases by the former Mimosa operator, Mondragon Leisure and Resorts Corp. (MLRC), which will go to CDC.

The remaining P150 million will be divided between the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., Ng said.

NTM-Jin Hung Joint Venture, a South Korean firm that won the bid for the Mimosa estate, agreed to absorb MLRC's liabilities.

CDC seized the estate in 1998, which was the biggest in the former United States military base here.

CDC stands to earn at least $2.1 million from the joint venture's annual rental of the 210-hectare estate, Ng said two weeks since capping the privatization program, the second following a failed bidding in 2003.

He ruled out bidding irregularities as alleged by Sen. Lito Lapid who filed a resolution seeking an investigation of the bid by the Senate's blue ribbon committee.

"To ensure above board bidding process, the Commission on Audit, Office of the Government Corporate Counsel and Pagcor have been consulted as part of the bidding process," Ng said.

According to Ng, the NTM-Jin Hung Joint Venture's bid was found to be "highly compliant, responsive, beneficial and advantageous to the government." *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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SEMINAR ROOM A (FREE ADMISSION)
JUNE 21, 2006
1:00 - 3:00 pm Best Energy Management Practices for Steam Systems, Spirax Sarco Phils.
3:30 - 5:30 pm CO2 Refrigerant for Industrial Refrigeration Seminar Engr. Cesar Luis Lim
JUNE 22, 2006
10:00 am - 12:00 nn Industrial Refrigeration Seminar with Emphasis on Liquid Overfeed System, Engr. Cesar Luis Lim
12:30 - 2:30 pm Savings Using Variable Frequency Drives, Jupp & Company
3:00 - 6:00 pm Thermal Energy Storage Systems Seminar, Engr. Cesar Luis Lim
JUNE 23, 2006
10:00 am - 12:00 nn Product Presentation, Schneider Electric Philippines, Inc.
12:30 - 2:30 pm Hydrocracked Lubricant Technology, Engr. Johnson Lim, Mechatronics
4:00 - 6:00 pm Product Presentation, Enertech Systems Industries, Inc.

ASHRAE SEMINAR ROOM B (A Special Seminar Series conducted in partnership with the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating & Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)) (PhP500 PER TOPIC)
JUNE 21, 2006
1:00 - 5:30 pm Air-Conditioning Cooling Load, Engr. Rosendo C. Perez, Jr.
JUNE 22, 2006
10:00 am - 12:00 nn Air Conditioning Equipment Selection, Engr. Lucil Lemson, Concepcion Carrier
12:30 - 6:00 pm Psychrometrics, Engr. Rosendo C. Perez, Jr.
JUNE 23, 2006
10:00 - 12:00 nn Pumps, AMEIT
12:30 - 5:00 pm Fans & Blowers, Design and Construction, Engr. Jason Tan, Niagara Industrial Equipment Corp.

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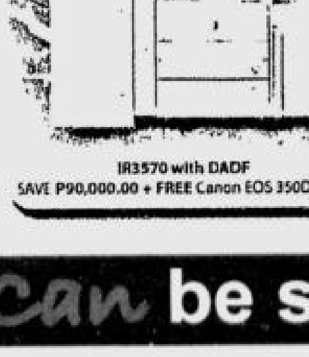
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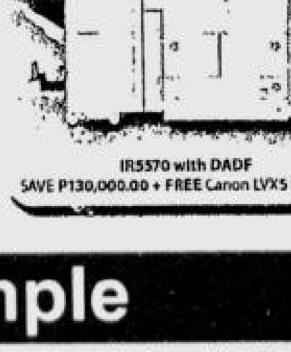
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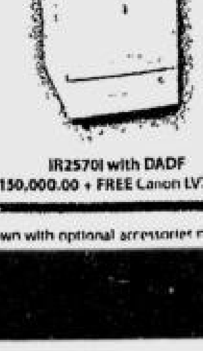
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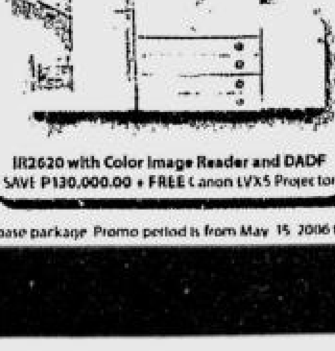
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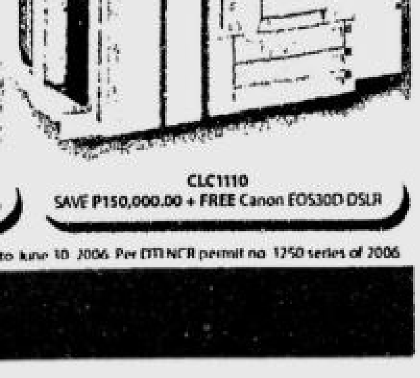
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SSS stretches actuarial life by 12 years

DELA PAZ

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM will be able to stretch its actuarial life up to 2031 from 2019, as earlier projected, through the implementation of administrative reforms and with improving market conditions.

Earlier, the SSS warned that its reserves might be depleted as early as 2019. But with the administrative reforms, along with an increase in members' contribution a few years ago, the SSS will be able to extend its projected actuarial life up to 2027.

Another four years will be added in view of the improvement in market conditions that raised the SSS' earnings from its stock investments, SSS president Corazon dela Paz told reporters yesterday.

"But our concern is that since 2000, we have not increased the benefits paid to members," Dela Paz said.

Over the last two years, she said the SSS had concentrated in improving the pension fund's financial health.

"We cannot ignore that at some point, we have to improve the benefits to pensioners. We are not against making additional payment to pensioners. Unfortunately, it can only be done if we can identify a source of funding," Dela Paz said.

She said other state-owned organizations that provide benefits, like Philhealth, were getting shares in the taxes collected by the government.

While the SSS had stretched its actuarial life for now, Dela Paz said the pension fund was still facing a tough environment.

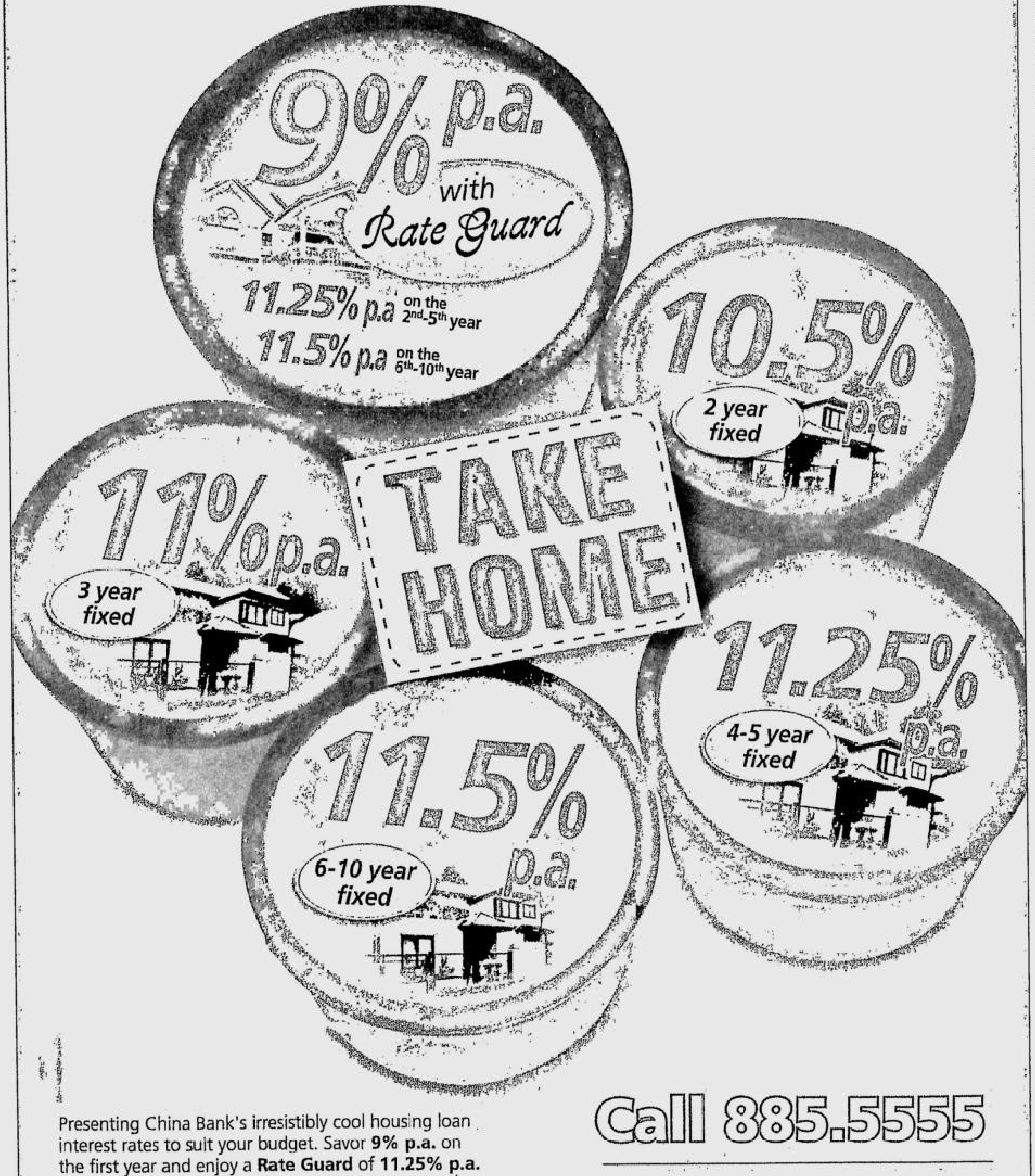
"The (Social Security) System will be 50 years old. Many of those who joined in the early stages are starting to retire. Even if we don't increase the benefits, the number of retirees are increasing," she said.

Despite the continuing financial challenges, the SSS has lowered the interest rate on its business and social loans to support small and medium scale enterprises and spur economic activity in the country.

The interest rate cut took effect last April.

Among the business loans offered by the SSS were: Special Financing Program for small and medium scale enterprises; Financing Program for Tourism Projects; Hospital Financing Program; Financing Program for Educational Institutions, including vocational and technical schools; and Industry Loan Program.

Interest Rate Delights



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ROUND-UP

Market for autogas still too small, says Shell exec

WHILE KEEN ON OFFERING MORE ALTERnative fuels to its customers, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. is not about to offer autogas or liquefied petroleum gas as transport fuel, in its stations.

Shell country chair Edgar Chua said the company had already converted a number of taxis in Cebu to autogas and it had also set up autogas pumps in some taxi terminals there.

Even in Manila, he said the oil firm had placed autogas pumps in certain taxi garages.

"We're doing it for fleets, for companies with 100 to 200 vehicles. But we're not about to do it in our stations because the market is not yet there," he said.

Fellow refiner Petron Corp. had earlier said it would be setting up autogas pumps in more of its stations around Metro Manila this year.

"The volumes are very encouraging. It's a good choice for taxi fleets, and the benefits are very quantifiable," Petron president and chief executive Khalid Al-Faddagh said in an earlier interview. *Abigail L. Ho*

Deal on electronic SSS payment system signed

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS AND pension fund Social Security System yesterday inked a deal to provide a fully electronic payment gateway for corporate clients.

BPI president Aurelio Montinola III told reporters the agreement would allow the bank's 2,000 corporate customers to remit to the SSS their monthly or quarterly employee premium contributions and transmit their detailed contribution listings using the bank's web-based channel ExpressLink Online.

These corporate clients will no longer have to go through the process of separately paying through the bank branch and then submitting their listing or contribution to their SSS branch office.

BPI vice president for cash management sales Nieves Basa said this modernized system would offer "convenience, increased productivity, reduced risk and greater security."

Doris C. Dumlao

Empire East earmarks P2.8B for housing projects

EMPIRE EAST LAND HOLDINGS INC., A 45-percent owned company of property giant Megaworld Corp., has earmarked roughly P2.8 billion for housing projects this year up to 2007, company president Anthony Charlemagne Yu said.

Following yesterday's stockholders' meeting, Empire East said it would spend P1.5 billion next year for a possible residential project in Laguna and Metro Manila.

This year, Empire East has a budget of P1.3 billion for construction work on California Garden Square's condominium towers in Mandaluyong, Xavier Hills in San Juan and Cambridge Village in the Pasig-Cainta area.

Empire East is in talks with possible joint venture projects for a residential project in Laguna and a condominium project in Metro Manila.

In another development, Empire East said it was also set to complete its buyback of shares worth P1 billion in the next two years. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Online broker sets offer price at P1.36 per share

ONLINE BROKER CITISECONLINE.COM yesterday set its offer price ay P1.36 per share.

CitisecOnline is offering 110 million new shares under its proposed initial public offer (IPO) which is projected to raise for the company P150 million. It earlier set for July 12 its tentative listing date.

This will be the second IPO this year after First Gen Corp.

Citiseconline will be the first purely online equities trader to list on the bourse and should qualify under the PSE's small and medium enterprises board.

Citiseconline plans to use the proceeds from the planned IPO for working capital to expand its client base and for its investments in technology.

The company was incorporated in 1999 and started commercial operations in 2001.

The company earlier said it wanted to tap Filipino investors overseas through its online trading and information services.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

IFC marks 50th anniversary in the Philippines with pledge to continue building business, creating opportunities

IFC marked its 50th anniversary year on June 13, 2006 with a program in the Philippines focusing on the challenges and opportunities in coming years as it provides support to local companies and expands its role in fostering economic development, alleviating poverty and improving people's lives.

Speakers at the event, entitled "Building Business and Creating Opportunities in the Philippines", held at the Metropolitan Museum in Manila, included Amando M. Tetangco Jr., Governor and Chair of the Monetary Board, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and Jamie Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, chair and chief executive officer of Ayala Corporation.

A banner year of performance

IFC director for East Asia and the Pacific, Javed Hamid, noted that IFC's 50th Anniversary is being marked in the context of a banner year of emerging market performance. Developing country economies in East Asia and the Pacific are expected to grow an average of 8 percent in 2005 and 2006 and the region as a whole is enjoying well over $100 billion in foreign direct investment annually.

However, Hamid pointed out that many parts of Asia and the Pacific were not sharing in the prosperity and there remained a huge unfinished agenda. "For all the progress of the emerging markets, we still see extreme poverty. Some 700 million people in East Asia and the Pacific still live on less than $2 per day. Even as we struggle to promote investment and create more jobs, we are still faced by signs of hunger and strife," he said.

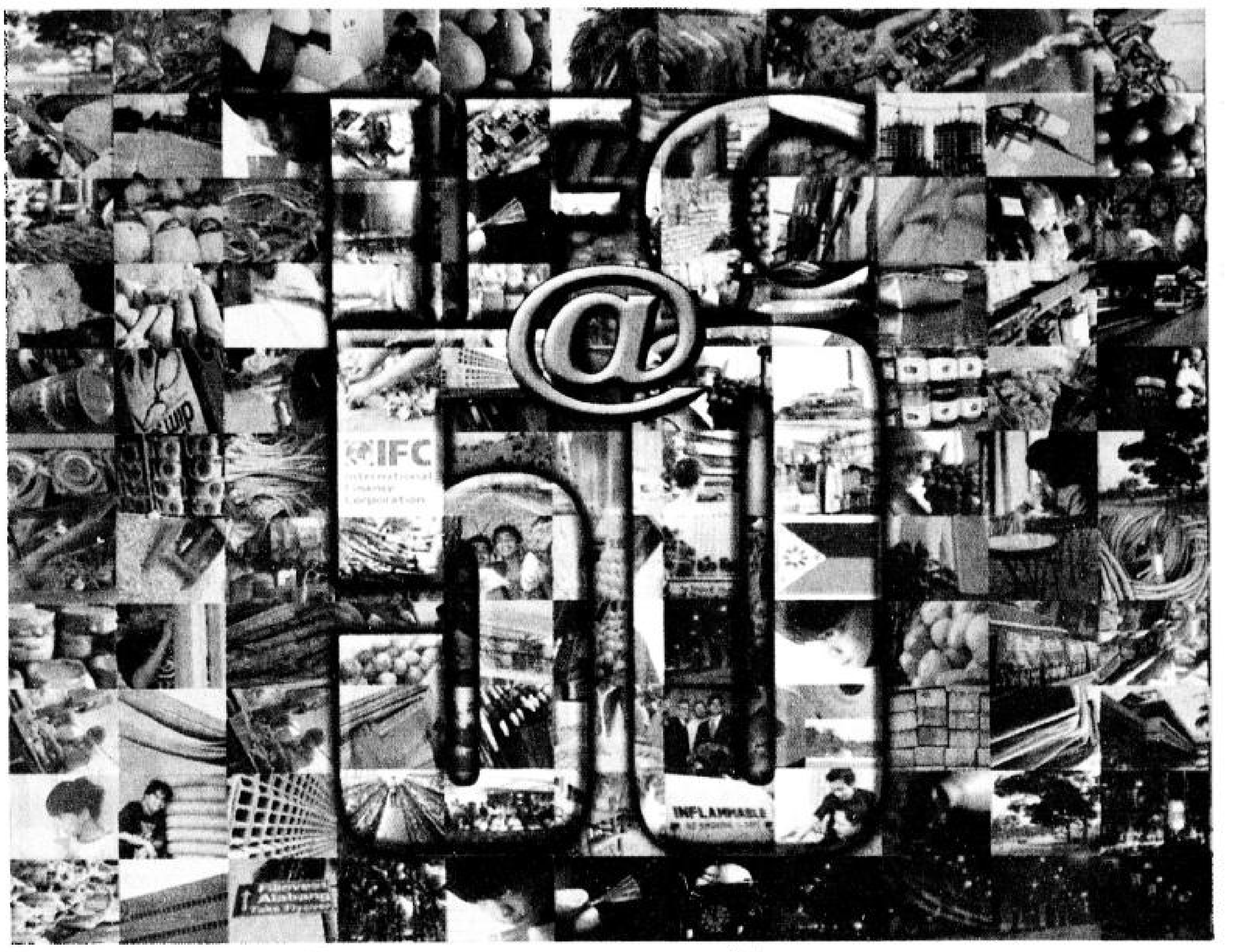
It is for this reason why IFC's work is about so much more than just good business, said Hamid. "It's about improving the lives of people, strengthening the performance of institutions, increasing the efficiency of markets, and unleashing the potential of individuals, communities and countries. This is what we are called to do," he said.

IFC in the Philippines

IFC's presence in the Philippines dates from 1962. IFC initially invested in companies such as the Private Development Corporation of the Philippines, its first investment, Meralco and the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company. In recent years IFC has put a priority on deepening and diversifying the Philippines' financial sector, promoting infrastructure and assisting the growth of small and medium enterprises. Other areas in which IFC continues to invest are sectors which harness the country's competitive human-capital advantages: agribusiness, health care, education, and information technology.

"To date, we have invested at least $2 billion in various companies in this country. And we are willing to invest another $2 billion, or even $5 billion, in the next five years, given the right opportunities, and with willing and motivated partners from the private sector," said Vipul Bhagat, IFC country manager for the Philippines and Thailand.

Earlier this year IFC's technical assistance and advisory services led it to establish PEP-Philippines, a multidonor undertaking by IFC and the governments of Australia and Canada. Operating primarily from IFC's new office in Davao City, PEP-Philippines is aimed at making small and medium enterprises drivers of economic growth. At the same time, IFC is providing support to the government's privatization efforts with a role as transaction advisor to big-ticket infrastructure projects such as the Small Power Utilities Group and the extension of the country's first Light Rail Transit system.



Messages

As chief executive of an institution that has seen good and bad spots over its 50 year history, I am confident that IFC is ready for our next 50 years. We hope our commitment to achieving strong financial returns while promoting high standards in corporate governance, environmental, and social practices can serve as a catalyst for private investors to channel more resources toward companies that can operate successfully in the neediest parts of the world.

At the same time, IFC aims to play a bigger role in supporting further development of domestic financial institutions and capital markets in Asia. Our work has ranged from pioneering the Panda bond market in China, to investments and loans to Chinese and Indonesian banks, to support for microfinance in Cambodia, Mongolia, and the Philippines. But our work is far from done. We will continue to play an active role in supporting financial institutions because companies need better access to finance across this region. We will also expand our work in technical assistance and advisory services. This remains a significant challenge across the developing world government and the private sector in the Philippines to meet this challenge and harness the power of markets and private enterprise to ensure a better tomorrow for the people of developing world.

LARS THUNELL (*Sgd.*)
Executive Vice President
International Finance Corporation

The Philippines is an important country for IFC. In 1977, the first office of IFC outside Washington was established in Manila. But prior to this we were already investing here in companies such as the Private Development Corporation of the Philippines, our first investment in 1962 and Meralco in the same year, and the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

To date, we have invested $2 billion in various projects in this country. In the coming years, we will continue to invest more and intensify our technical assistance and advisory services.

IFC remains committed to supporting the Philippines, and will continue to forge long term partnerships with the private sector. We will continue to invest in projects that create jobs, improve people's lives while addressing environmental, social and gender concerns.

VIPUL BHAGAT (*Sgd.*)
Country Manager for the Philippines and Thailand
International Finance Corporation

Congratulations to the International Finance Corporation on your 50th anniversary celebration. I am delighted to be part of this milestone. The IFC has always been an important partner in the Philippines' quest for economic progress as it has consistently supported the development of vital sectors of the economy. In many ways, it has been a key enabler for the private sector to take a more involved role in hastening the country's growth and development.

Again, congratulations on your 50th anniversary.

JAIME AUGUSTO ZOBEL DE AYALA II (*Sgd.*)
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
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PEP-Philippines: Driving economic growth through small and medium enterprises

Small and medium enterprises are the backbone of the Philippine economy, comprising 97 percent of the total number of businesses. Yet they contribute less than a third of the national output.

To tap the unrealized potential of smaller businesses, the International Finance Corporation established the Private Enterprise Partnership for the Philippines. Managed by IFC and co-financed by the Governments of Australia and Canada, PEP-Philippines is designed to support the development of small and medium enterprises and increase their contribution to the economy. While PEP-Philippines does not provide direct financing for small and medium enterprises, its programs are carefully targeted to directly address growth and competitiveness issues that prevent small businesses from becoming the primary drivers of economic growth.

As the private investment arm of the World Bank Group, IFC is in a unique position to combine

PEP/B2-4

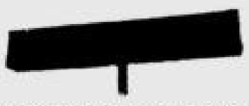
IFC, donors and government partners toast to economic growth during the launch of PEP-Philippines (from left): Canada's Second Secretary for Development Joe Goodings, PEP-Philippines general manager Chris Richards, Australia's First Secretary for Development Angus Barnes, SBGFC head Benel Lagua, MEDCO chair Virgilio Leyretana Jr., PEP-Philippines country coordinator Euan Marshall and IFC country manager for the Philippines and Thailand Vipul Bhagat.

If only people put others' needs before their own

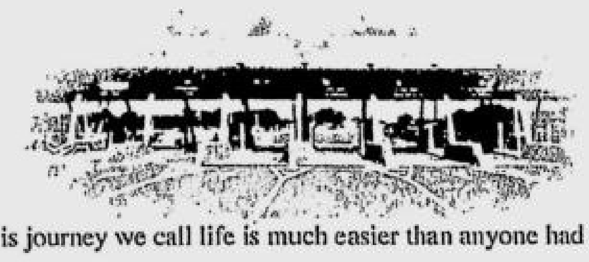
looked after one another

heeded each other's call

took time seriously



and sought more guidance from above...



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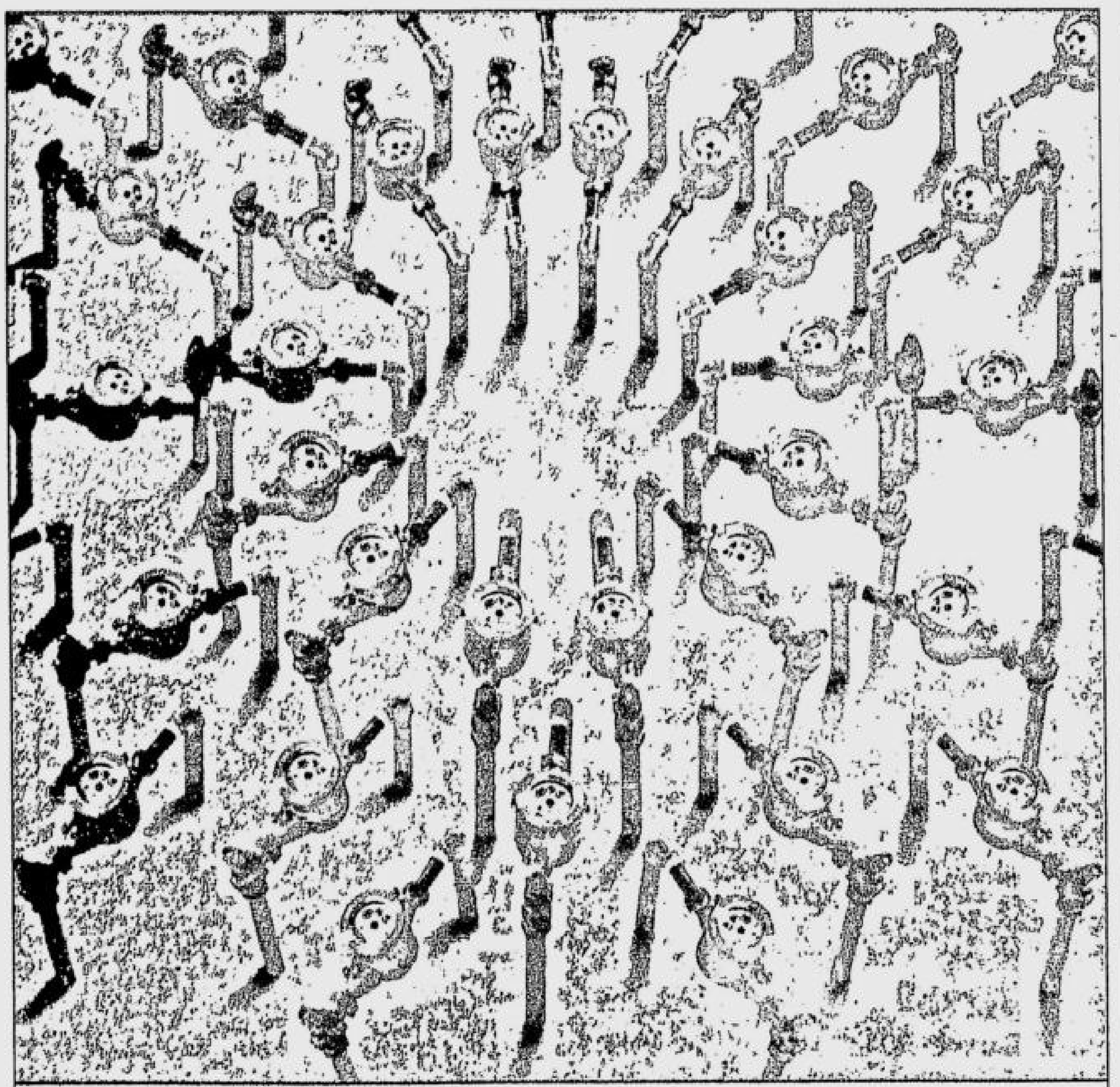

For the past nine years, in the East Zone, people count on only one company to keep their lives flowing smoothly: Manila Water. With generous capital investments of over P18 billion and excellent customer service, this Ayala company promptly increased its customer base from a mere 325,000 to 741,000 households. And all around the East Zone, water that's clean and safe flows freely 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Even the problem of water losses due to leaks and illegal connections has dropped from 63% in 1997 to 34 % for the first quarter of 2006.

This effort alone made it possible for an additional two million people to enjoy reliable water service. Manila Water will continue to pour capital investments and for 2006 alone, P 4.5 billion will be invested and the same passionate effort into more projects to benefit its present and future areas of service. Now, that's commitment beyond measure.

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IFC in the Philippines at a glance

The International Finance Corporation, the private investment arm of the World Bank Group, has been investing in the Philippines for more than 40 years, having a physical presence in the country since 1977. It is the first IFC office outside of its headquarters in Washington DC. IFC continues to grow and expand its investments, advisory and technical assistance services in the Philippines, consistent with its mission of helping reduce poverty and improve people's lives through sustainable private sector investments.

With a total exposure of about US$500 million in 35 projects as of January 2006, the Philippines is ranked among IFC's top 10 country exposures worldwide as of May 2006. IFC priorities in the Philippines, in line with the Government objectives, include investments that deepen and diversify the financial sector, support viable, sustainable infrastructure projects (especially in transportation, energy, and water), and assist in reviving the mining sector with model sustainable projects. IFC has also expanded its technical assistance and advisory activities in the country, focusing on infrastructure and development of small and medium enterprises.

Investing in growth

Over the years, IFC steadily increased its investments in the Philippines, with $67 million in 2003, $90 million in 2004 and $102 million in 2005. Investments were made in infrastructure, the housing finance sector, insurance, energy, power distribution and information technology. This year, IFC plans to commit in excess of the 2005 amount, including in infrastructure such as toll roads and power and the financial sector for small and medium enterprises and housing activities. IFC is also looking at opportunities in sectors which harness the country's competitive human-capital advantages, such as agribusiness, health care, education, and information technology.

Providing technical assistance

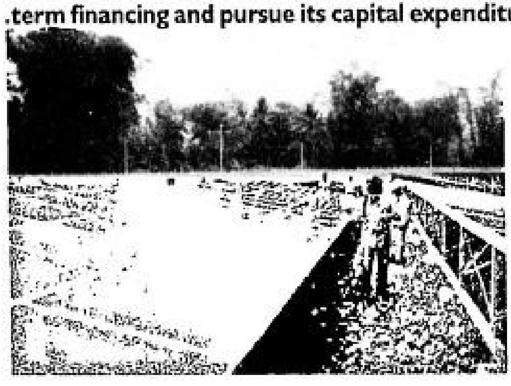
In 2005, President Arroyo witnessed the MOU signing at the Malacañang to establish Private Enterprise Partnership for the Philippines, a multi-donor initiative by IFC and the governments of Australia and Canada. Launched on April 2006, the technical assistance program aims to increase the contribution of small and medium enterprises to the economy by expanding the range of opportunities and capabilities available to them. Operating primarily from its office in Davao City, PEP-Philippines focuses its attention to address the strong development needs in Mindanao, where poverty incidence is the highest. Its programs range from easing small businesses' access to financing, enhancing the business climate at the subnational level and fostering agribusiness linkages between small and large businesses.

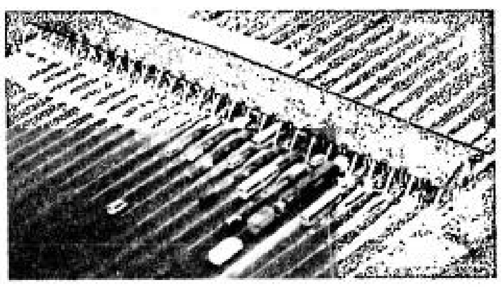
Engaging in advisory services

IFC is working with key government agencies to provide advisory services, seeking to promote private sector investment in infrastructure. For example, with the Department of Energy, IFC is a transaction advisor to mobilize private sector participation for off-grid islands, for the Small Power Utilities Group. Another example being undertaken with the Light Rail Transit Authority (within the Department of Transportation and Communication) is for the extension of the LRT-1 rail line from southern Metro Manila into Cavite province. The third involves helping craft a framework for water projects throughout the country, with the initial being in Cebu (through the Metro Cebu Water District), a prime tourism and investment destination.

For more information, please visit www.ifc.org/eastasia.

CEPALCO
IFC committed a US$15 million loan to CEPALCO for the upgrading and expansion of its distribution and generation facilities. This was to allow the company to gain access to longer-term financing and pursue its capital expenditure program.

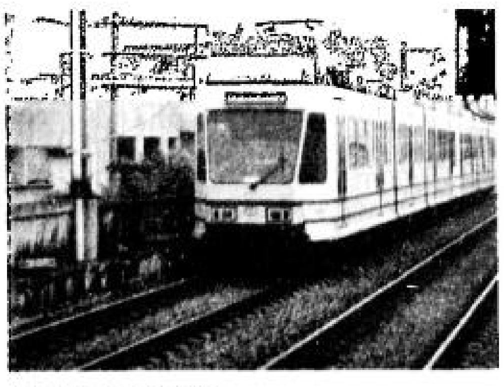




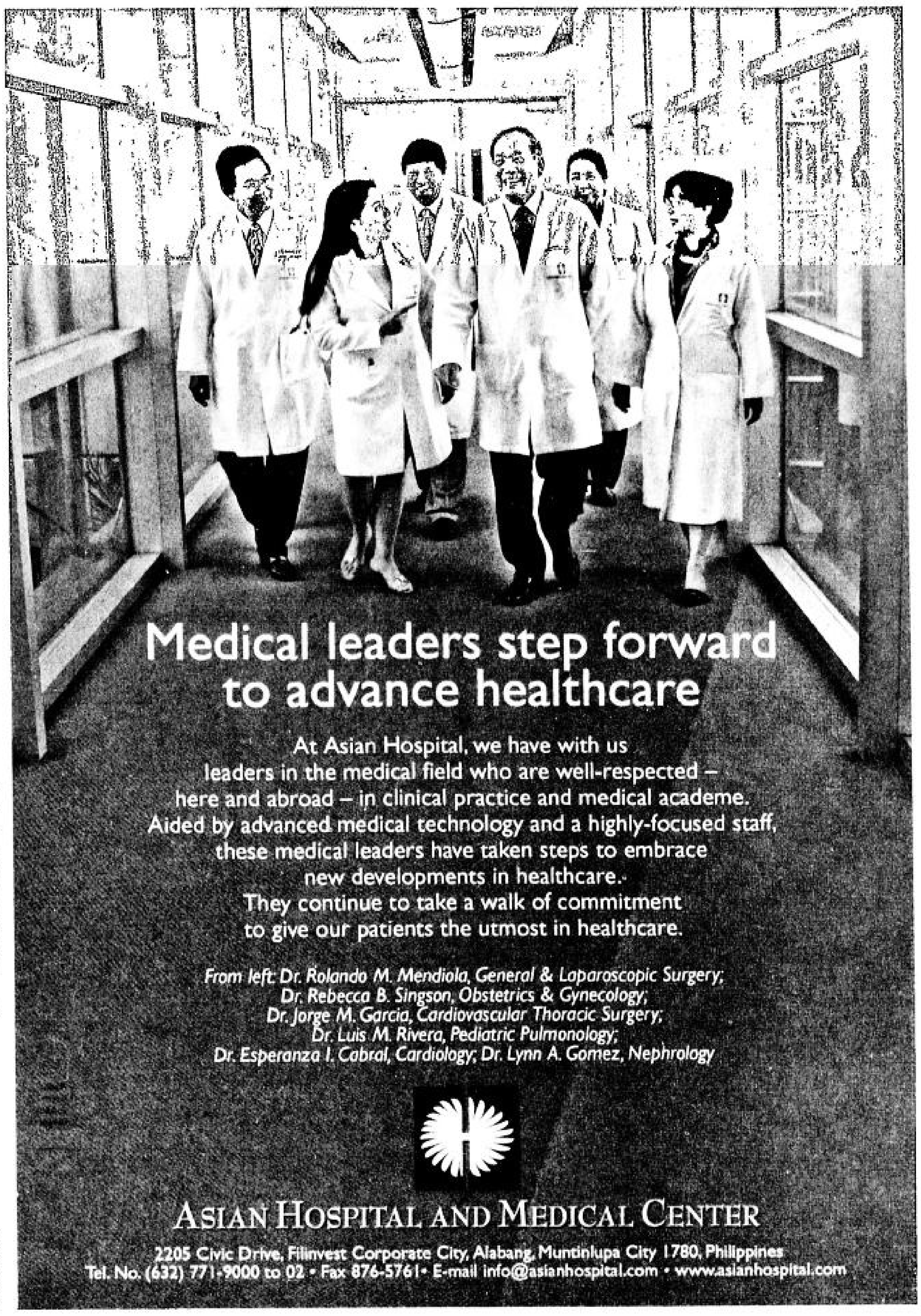
MANILA NORTH LUZON EXPRESSWAY
In 2001, IFC invested $46 million for the rehabilitation of the tollway going to provinces in the North from Manila.

MIRANT PAGBILAO PLANT
IFC approved a $110 million investment in Hopewell, Pagbilao, a 700-megawatt coal-fired thermal power plant.

MANILA WATER
IFC provided a loan of up to US$30 million equivalent in yen in 2003 which has been fully disbursed and committed an A Loan of US$20 million and a standby facility of US$10 million in 2004, to support Manila Water's capital expenditure program. IFC also invested US$15 million in equity in August 2004 prior to its IPO in March 2005, to help the company attract more investors.



LRT 1 EXTENSION
IFC is acting as transaction advisor for the planned extension of the first mass transit system in the Philippines.



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Dr. Jorge M. Garcia, Cardiovascular Thoracic Surgery;
Dr. Luis M. Rivera, Pediatric Pulmonology;
Dr. Esperanza I. Cabral, Cardiology; Dr. Lynn A. Gomez, Nephrology

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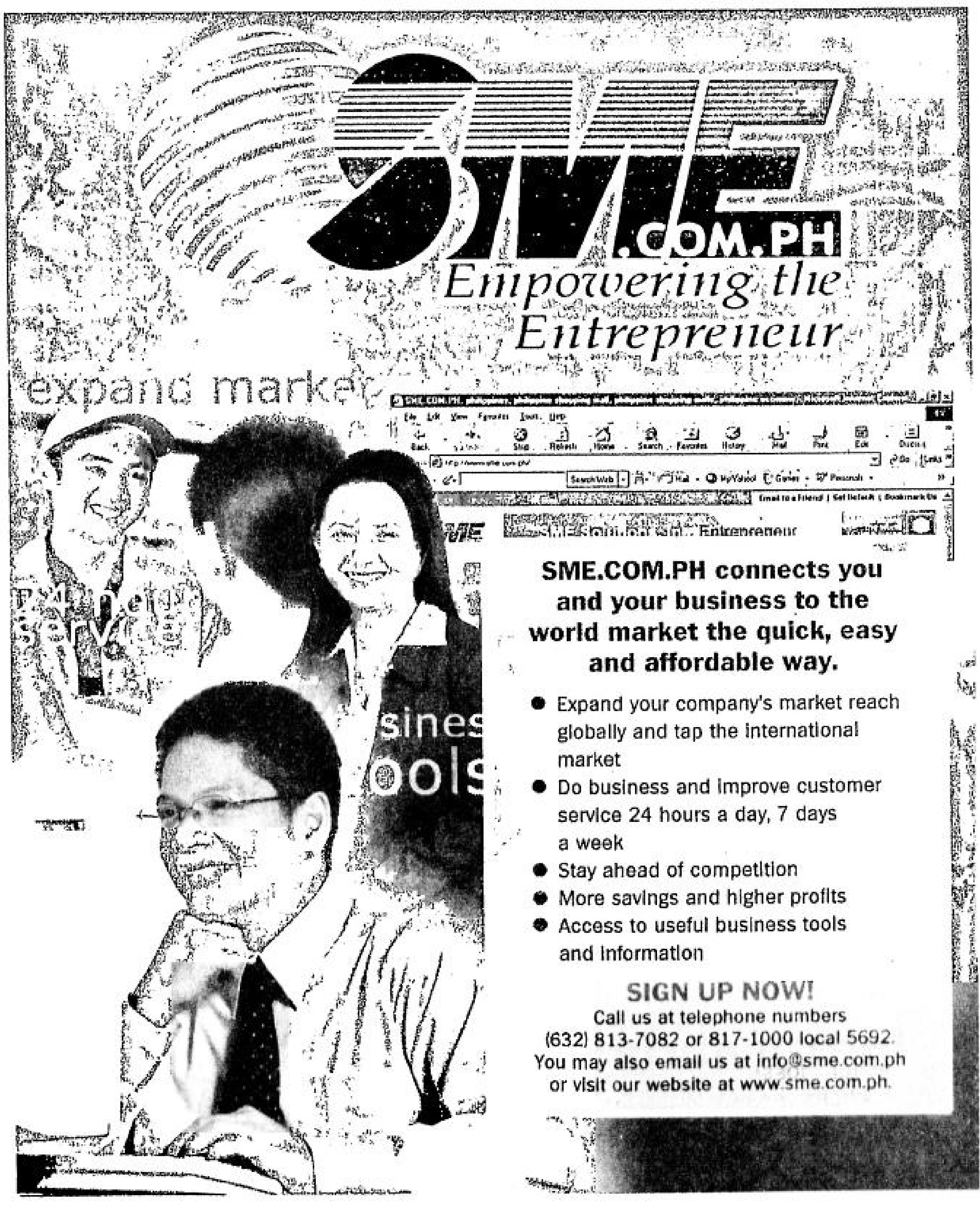

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IFC International Finance Corporation

PEP-Philippines: Driving economic growth through small and medium enterprises

From page B2-2

its expertise on investments with technical assistance to offer an integrated approach to promoting sustainable private sector development. PEP-Philippines will draw on this integrated expertise to implement projects that would ease small and medium enterprises' access to finance, strengthen linkages between large and small market players and help improve the overall business environment.

PEP-Philippines looks to Mindanao, where poverty incidence is the highest, as a priority area for its projects.

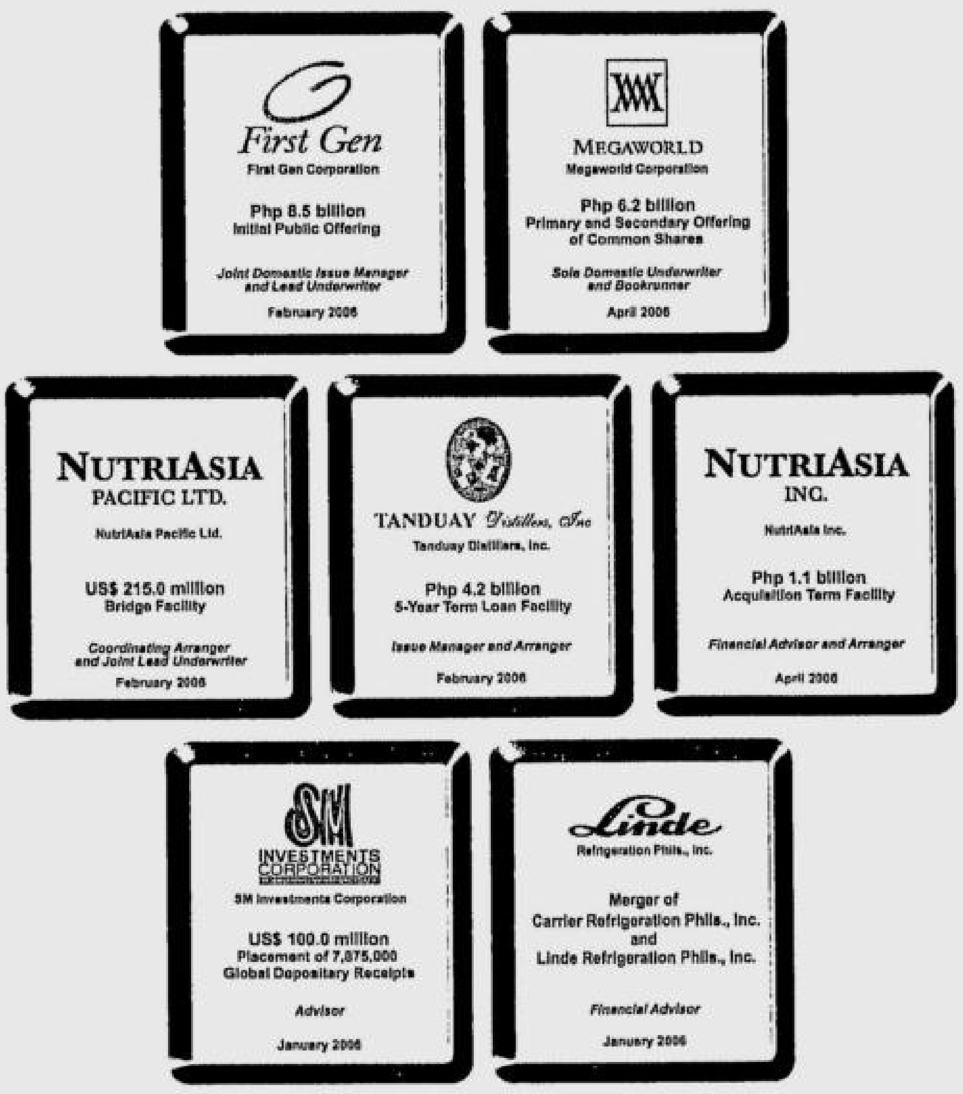
In April 2006, PEP-Philippines hit the ground running by starting the implementation of rural finance, seaweed and local investment climate promotion programs. The rural finance program aims to increase farmers' access to formal sources of credit while the seaweed program will introduce a new technology to increase farmers' revenues. The investment climate promotion program aims to help reduce the cost of doing business by simplifying business registration procedures.

Several programs are also currently being designed, including a program to assist the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas in setting up a credit bureau, another to assist farmers in improving practices and gaining better access to larger and more profitable markets, and one to help companies with sustainable energy projects in accessing funds from commercial banks.

There are also ongoing studies to determine whether PEP-Philippines can undertake programs on small and medium enterprise banking, entrepreneurship training for overseas Filipino workers and developing alternative modes of settling commercial conflicts of small and medium enterprises.

IFC OFFICIALS LEAD THE OPENING OF THE IFC OFFICE IN DAVAO CITY

Shown are (from left): Warrick Smith, senior regional manager for technical assistance and advisory services, PEP-Philippines country coordinator Euan Marshall, IFC country manager for the Philippines and Thailand Vipul Bhagat and PEP-Philippines general manager Chris Richards.



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NutriAsia Inc.
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LIFESTYLE

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Father's Day scrapbook

He is our pillar, our rock. Our basketball and DVD buddy. Our pizza-night partner. Our provider. Our source of strength. Our friend. Our ally. He makes us laugh. Sometimes he makes us cry. He teaches us lessons. He talks about life. He inspires. He is an example. He's always there for us. He makes mom happy. This week, 2bU! pays tribute to the main man in our lives. You rock, dad!

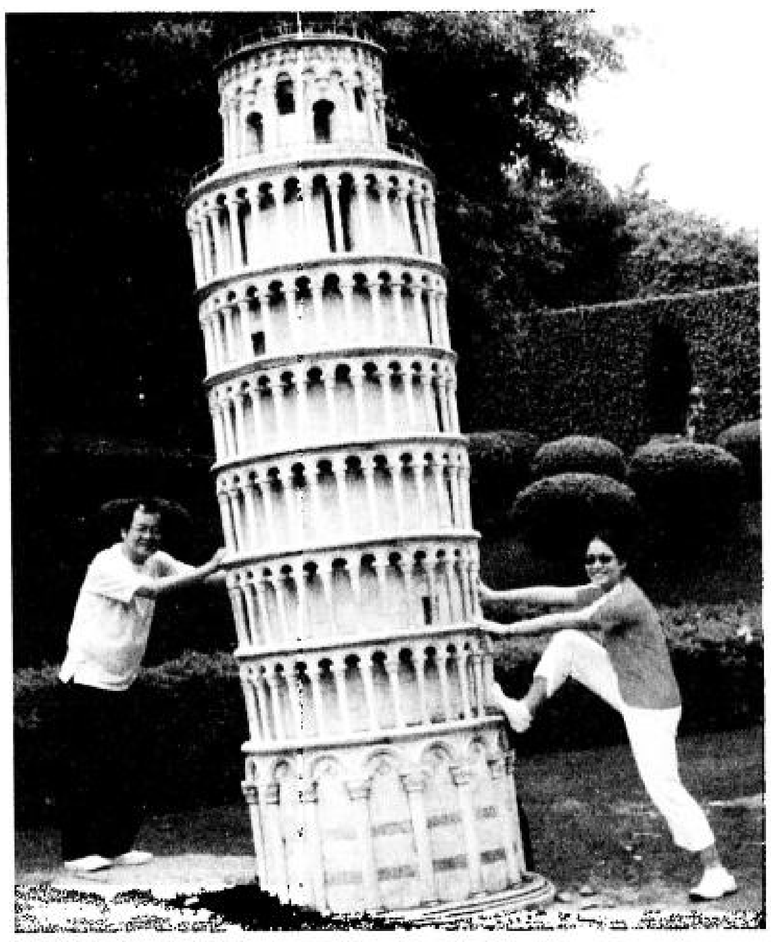
Everything is possible

By Leslie Tan
2bU! Correspondent

MY DAD LOVES WATCHING magic shows. When we were younger, we would eagerly anticipate each of David Copperfield's tricks. Each show would always have this big finale, this impossible task that the Master of Illusion would somehow surpass. We watched in fascination as he walked through the Great Wall, as he broke out of locks and chains underwater, and I think he even managed to fly.

Over the years, the magicians have changed, the tricks have also become more elaborate, but my dad's interest has not waned. After all, it remains good entertainment.

I often wonder why he found these magic shows so interesting even after all these years, when certainly he realizes they are merely illusions. Copperfield, or any magician for that matter, can't possibly guess your mind; much less, make people disappear! But the curious thing about magic shows and its audience is that while we all know there is deception somewhere in the equation, we allow ourselves to suspend disbelief and think for a moment that the impossible can happen.


ME AND my dad

And here I think lies the answer to why magic is so close to my dad's heart. For him, there is no such thing as impossibility. Everything is possible.

Growing up, our parents taught us to voice out our opinions. We were allowed to reason out, to explain our actions and decisions. You see, nothing was in black and white. Everything was possible, in shades of grey.

We gained our confidence as individuals because our parents allowed us to take responsibility and to face challenges head-on. Again, everything was possible, even at a tender age.

The greatest lesson that we learned? All dreams are achievable. The greatest value we imbibed? To think without borders, to act without limits.

These days, when I catch magic shows on TV while channel-surfing, I would linger awhile to see the latest trick. I know the illusion has been cleverly disguised, but for a moment, I suspend my disbelief, like my dad always does, to pave the way for the impossible to become possible.

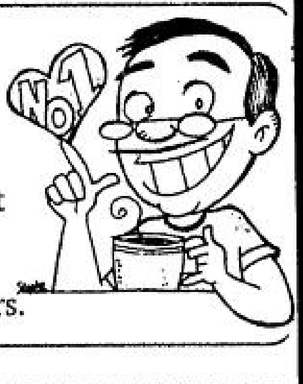
Happy Father's Day, Pa! Thank you for teaching us to believe.

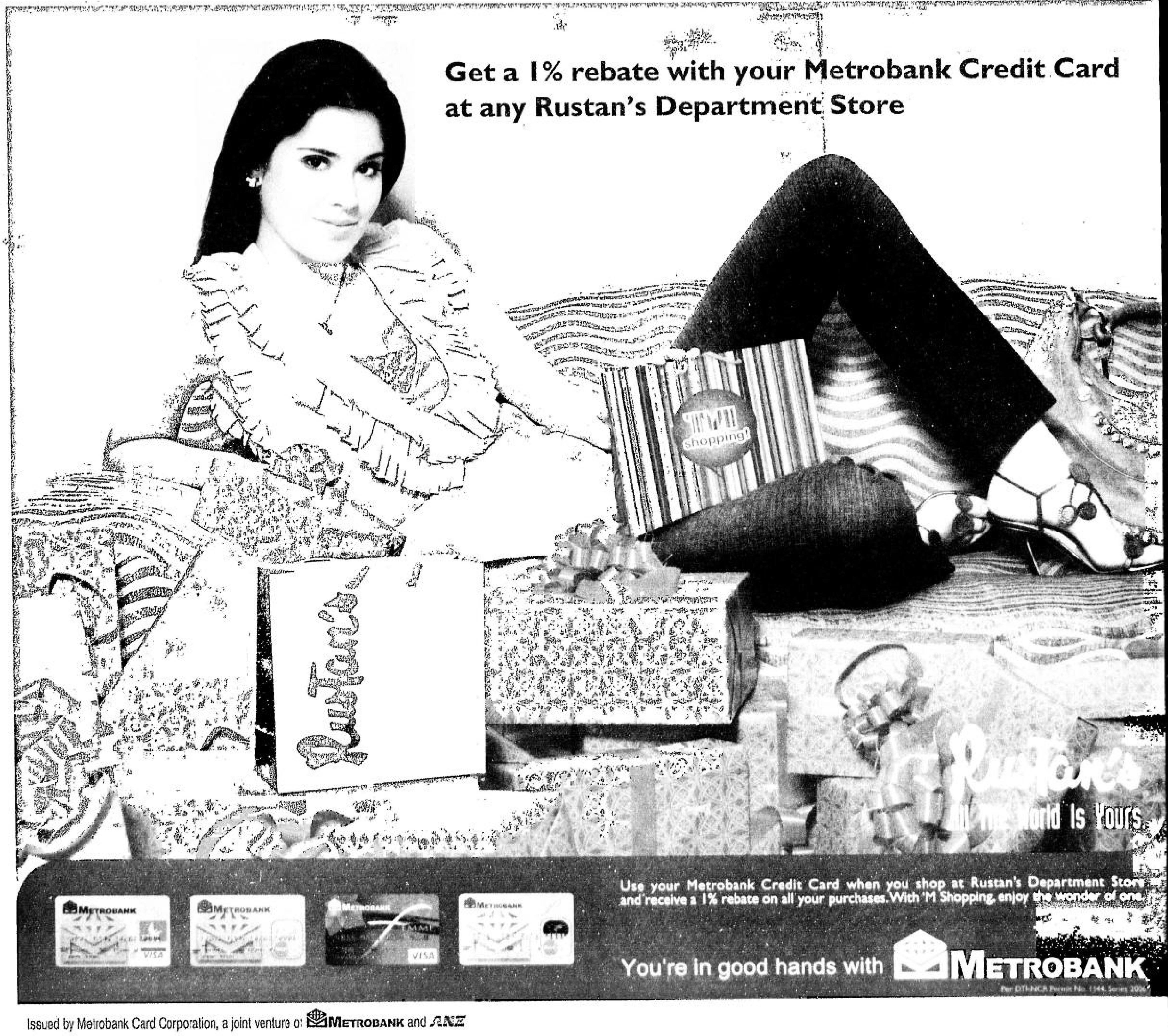
Father knows best

FOR AN UPCOMING STORY in the Sunday Lifestyle section, tell us in 150 words or less what's the best piece of advice your father has given you, or what's the most important lesson you've learned from your father. Deadline is June 14.

E-mail to dad2reader@inquirer.com.ph. Or mail to PDI-Lifestyle Section, PO Box 2353, Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati City, attn: Dad to Reader. Or text to 0918-3824061.

Include your full name, address and phone numbers.

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THE TIU kids with mom and dad

Our photogenic memories with Dad

DEAREST PAPA JERRY,

The greatest years of our lives were spent with you. We've gone through a lot together as a family, and this Father's Day, we would like to look back and cherish some of our most memorable times with you.

I'll never forget the two instances I left to study abroad and you called me to bid your final goodbye just as I was about to board the plane. Right after we hung up, you texted me right away saying you were crying already.—Cheryl

I'll never forget the times when you pointed out my missed free throws after a game. They always challenge me to practice harder and to concentrate!—Chris

I'll never forget the time when you were so mad at me and I said my famous words, "I love you even if you're mad at me."—Charles

I'll never forget the time when you couldn't control your appetite for Twin Popsies. You kept asking for more, even if Syoti and I wouldn't let you eat anymore—and you went crazy without them.—Christine

I'll never forget the time you drove me to McDonald's to enjoy a vanilla soft-serve (just the two of us).—Christian

As we reminisce together, we all know that we would not be who and what we are today without you and your undying love and support. Thank you for being the greatest dad in the world! Happy Father's Day!

Love,
The Tiu kids

The first magician in my eyes

By Arlene M. Paredes
2bU! Correspondent

> When I was difficult to love, you looked through me and found good reasons to never give up on me

IT MUST'VE BEEN REALLY tough for you then, Tatay. You were 69 when I came into the world, a helpless tiny infant.

Then you were in your mid-70s when I was a hyperactive, crazy-dramatic, irrationally demanding and attention-hungry toddler. But you loved me well and you took care of me as a doting *lolo-tatay*.

I didn't help make it easy for you. I was a very naughty child. Once, I made you gasp for air after you had to chase me around the house to try to discipline me with your scary *sinturon* (leather belt). I was mischievous and rather challenging, so I ran away from you, unmindful that I was giving you a really tiresome exercise. I still got the whip, all right, and remembered never to mess up with you again.

But more than remembering the lesson learned, I wish I didn't have to make fatherhood even harder for you than it already was. But I was your daughter and you knew what you had to do and you loved me still. I never even once got to really thank you for loving me in spite of the very difficult situation we were in.

You made the most of what we had and tried your best so I, as a child, would not feel the lack of a strong father in my very vulnerable years.

I know a lot of children who aren't so fortunate to get even a glimpse of a father. But you always gave your best. Dressed in a barong Tagalog, you fetched me from my school on the first day of classes. People must've thought it was weird, but I knew you had not fetched a child from school in a very long time and must've forgotten that you could opt to dress down for it.

Fortunately, the more appropriate time to wear the barong Tagalog came when we accepted my first medal in school. You must've been the oldest father in the Recognition Day crowd, but on that day you must've felt proud. At least I hope you did. Because apart from that, I can't deny that I gave you a lot of unnecessary trouble growing up.

When I was 4 or 5 years old, I gave you quite a shock when I stuck my head between the wooden bars of our *sari-sari* store. Naturally curious, I played and tried to see if my tiny head (no, not tiny, I was fat!) could fit between the wooden bars of our store window.

I was amused that it did, but quickly I realized I couldn't get my head out. So I cried and wailed like a siren for our entire little town to hear! You had to run out and call your carpenter friend to cut the bars using the smallest saw. Funny, but I don't remember how afraid I was with the saw only an inch away from my neck!

You were in a state of real panic then, but all I could think of was, "Oh, my God! I'm sure Tatay will keep my head intact!" Of course, you did. Nanay and I would later look back at that time and, though we both knew it wasn't funny at all, we'd end up laughing hard about it.

Nanay had all these stories of how tense you were when she was pregnant. You probably were anxious that the capacity to take care of a person was already beyond you. But see, we turned out fine because you never let your age get in the way of being the best father that you could be.

Before you got very ill, we enjoyed fun rides together around the town, on your bike and your old truck. Next to your patience, love and care, my ultimate gift from you was this little bike with a sidecar that you got from a passing junk collector. With your natural craftsmanship, you made it look almost new, and I had something that most of my playmates then could only dream of: my own wheels, a real funky ride!

When you finished reassembling that bike for me, you became the first magician in my eyes, turning junk into precious treasure. Later, I would realize that you were indeed a magician because you could see things differently. What others saw as trash, you transformed into a magical wonder of a toy. And when I was difficult to love, you looked through me and found good reasons to never give up on me.

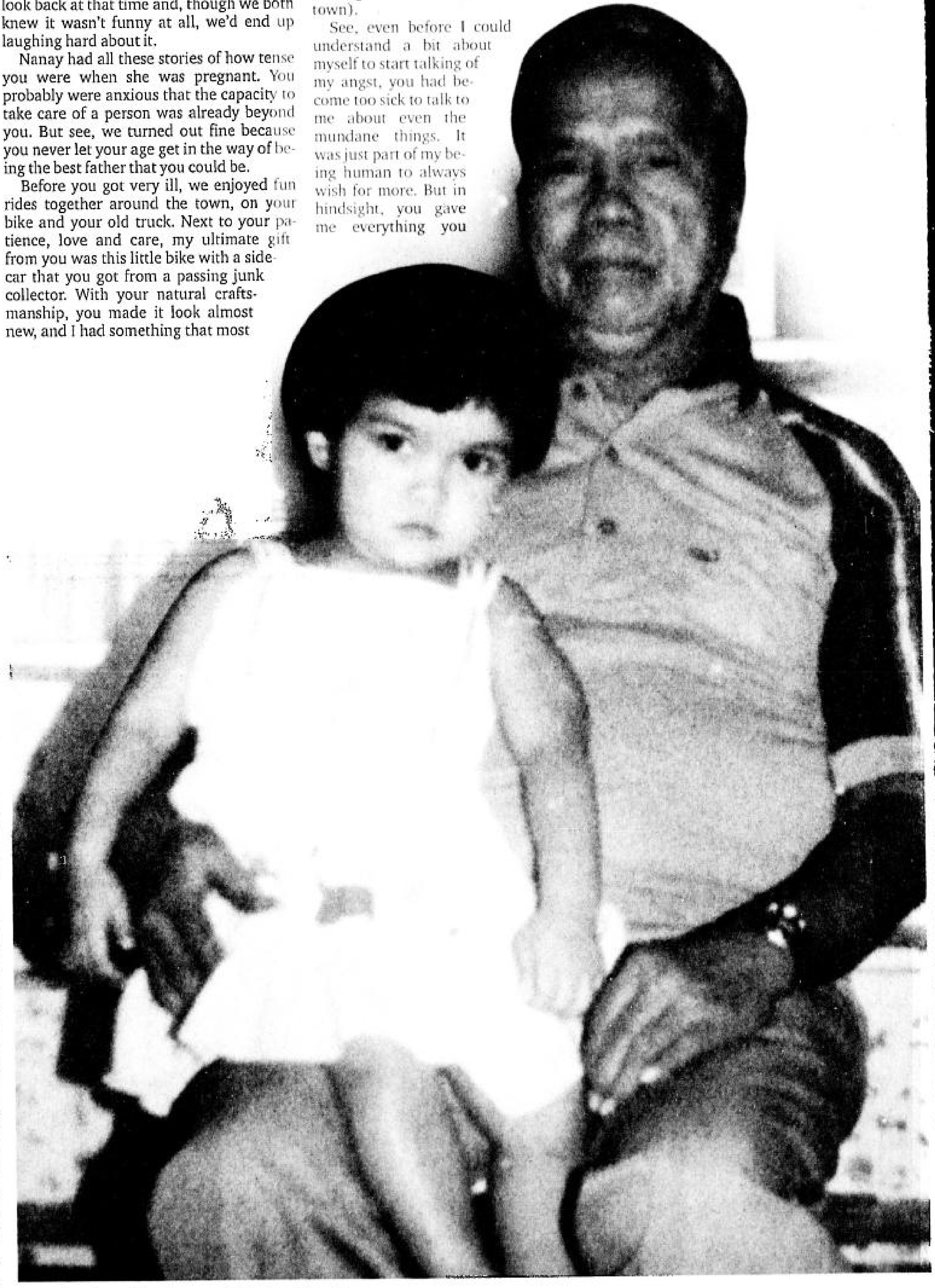
You were the first one to go the extra mile to love me a bit more each day, even when I was unwittingly making myself so unlovable. Movies like "Riding in Cars with Boys" where a daughter can talk her heart out to her father never fail to make me cry, because it's an important experience that I wish I had been able to share with you (including more fun truck rides around the town).

See, even before I could understand a bit about myself to start talking of my angst, you had become too sick to talk to me about even the mundane things. It was just part of my being human to always wish for more. But in hindsight, you gave me everything you could while you still could, and that's more than enough for me.

I was 17 when you died. I prayed for God to let you live until you're "90-plus" because I thought by then you would have walked me down to the altar and met your grandchild from me. But God said, no, you had to go. God, of course, is always right. There's a time for everything and you made our time together all worthwhile.

There is no way for me to thank you enough. But I'm writing this for my sake—so I'll remember that my father loved me, and that love should be enough to carry me through whatever difficulties I'd meet.

I'm sure you and Nanay are watching over me now, and will always do. So here's to love and to a great father. Happy Father's Day, 'Tay!



TATAY and me when I was too difficult to handle!

My Dad always provided me with the necessities in life: food, clothing, shelter... hair products, manicures, pedicures, body lotions, designer handbags, designer jeans, lipstick, eyeliner, blush, DvDs, MP3 players, and so much more. He went without so that I could have more. He gave me so much including the most important thing in the world: all of his love.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!

Chrissie & Felice

The first time I saw my father cry

y Carlo Olivares
bU! Contributor

> Father had a different way of showing his love. It was through violence. But he could also admit he was wrong

VHEN I WAS ABOUT 4 YEARS ld, when dragons were real and oys were alive, my father used to vork for my grandfather's export ompany located right beside their ouse. While he would spend hours vorking in the office, I would blissully play the hours away with my tuffed monkey in the guest bedoom of my grandparents' house.

At around 3 p.m. every day, the ice-cream an pushed his ice-cream cart across the street, my grandfather's hungry employees went on break. The bell of the ice cream man would ansport me back to reality from some distant nd. I'd run to my grandmother's room to ask r five pesos to buy myself an ice-cream cone.

However, on one particular day, my grandother had bought Selecta ice cream from the grocery. I preferred Selecta over the dirty ice cream sold outside, but I wanted to eat it off a cone. My grandmother was out of ice cream cones. So I thought of a rather grown-up solution: I would buy just a cone from the ice cream man and pair it with my grandmother's Selecta ice cream.

I collected my five pesos from grandma and ran as fast as I could to the ice cream man. On my way there, I passed the maid's room and my *yaya*, seeing me running, thought I was up to no good.

On my way back from the ice-cream man, cone in hand, my *yaya* came to the conclusion that I stole the cone. Despite telling her I paid for it, she wouldn't believe me. She did what all *yayas* usually do. She called my father.

My father was a strict and distant man. He was a bit heavily built, had a loud, harsh voice and was quick to use his hands. Upon hearing that his son, the proof and joy of his manhood, "stole" an ice cream cone, he quickly left his office to straighten me out. He found me in the kitchen, cone in hand, scooping out *ube* ice cream.

My father did not need any explanation. He picked me up and beat me. I was so afraid that I couldn't speak. I was probably no different from a dog, unaware of the reason for his master's beating. When I finally got the message across that I had paid for the cone using my grandmother's money, my father stopped. He let me go and went outside. I assumed he went to the ice-cream man to validate my claims, while I hid under the stove with my stuffed monkey.

My stuffed monkey was the only thing in the world I could depend on. People could hurt me but my toys couldn't.

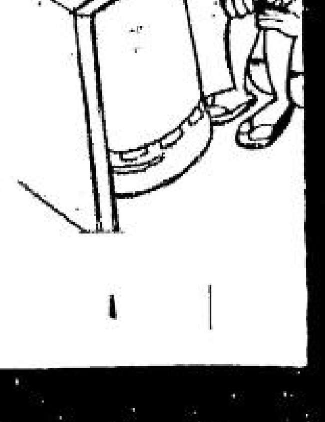
My father returned with two ice-cream cones, and started quietly calling my name. I, of course, would not, and could not, answer. However, my father heard my whimpering and knelt down in front of the stove. I saw he was crying. This was the first time I had ever seen my father cry.

Apparently, even he could admit he was wrong. His rock-hard exterior was finally broken.

Father had a different way of showing his love. It was through violence. Morbid as that may sound, I suppose he believed that violence was justified when it was done out of love.

My father tried to apologize. I was too shaken to respond. I just continued my crying. He tried offering me one of his ice cream cones, but I was in no mood.

I don't remember now what happened to the ice-cream cones. I just remember that we both sat there, sobbing together.



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'Sensei'

By Ina Alleco R. Silverio
2bU! Contributor

(My own father, Florentino S. Silverio, died three years ago. I'm writing now about my father in the Philippine progressive mass movement, Rafael Baylosis.)

WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE, I WAS A MEMBER OF THE University of the Philippines Karate Association (UPKA). Our *sensei*—or teacher—was *shihan* (synonymous with teacher, or master) Jerome. He was a tall, well-built man who was on the quiet side. He was friendly but firm. He wasn't a perfectionist, but he demanded that his students—us UPKA members who kicked and punched and leaped and jumped like sweating lizards in white *gis* within a red *dojo*—perform the exercises or *kata* with more than plain dexterity.

I think he wanted us to be graceful. Not surprising, since karate-do was a sport of grace, not unlike ballet.

From sensei Jerome I learned how to place well-aimed blows, how to make the proper fist (thumbs tucked under the other fingers to secure them from being broken upon impact with a hard object like, say, someone's skull), how to make the air whistle with kicks swiftly delivered then retracted, how to pivot, with my center of gravity nearer to the ground and my body below hitting range. I learned to slow-breathe, focus and meditate.

It was exhilarating. Sensei Jerome was a great teacher.

Now, a decade later, I have a different sensei. I'm not studying karate anymore, but I'm studying something more difficult and demanding than karate.

My *sensei*'s name is Rafael Baylosis. He used to be the secretary general of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) before he was imprisoned by the Marcos dictatorship. He was released in 1995. Now, as a strictly legal, above-ground civilian, he is the vice chair of Anakpawis National Political Party and a consultant on socioeconomic concerns in the peace negotiations between the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP).

I've had the honor of working with and learning from *Ka* Raffy since 1998 when I was still in the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) labor center as propaganda officer, and he was the political affairs secretary. It was from him that I learned to get up at 6 a.m. and be ready to begin writing 15 minutes later. (He was always my wake-up call. Used to bug the hell out of me).

He taught me how to be consistent with my work habits. I try to imitate and adopt his own work ethic—constancy, timeliness, economic but determined movements, sharp awareness of developments, and how to recognize, analyze and then resolve political contradictions in concepts and ideas.

He taught me to push the limits of what I used to believe were the limits of my abilities and skills.

But apart from these, I learned and still learn from *Ka* Raffy how to live with integrity. I know this sounds stilted, but this is the only way I can describe it.

Rafael Baylosis is a great father, a loving husband, a supportive comrade, an intellectual and a dreamer. He has, since he became an activist at 18 in UP Diliman, a friend and comrade to the likes of then 21-year-old José Ma. Sison and other veterans of the First Quarter Storm and the Diliman Commune. He lives plainly and simply, but always his actions and thoughts have been profoundly in service to a cause greater than himself.

After presiding over important campaigns or consultation meetings, he washes the dishes after meals in the Anakpawis headquarters and cleans the conference room. He always asks after the health of *kasamas*, or how they're doing in their respective lines of work. He makes silly and corny jokes that people often laugh at, not so much because the jokes themselves are funny, but because they are amused at *Ka* Raffy's boyishness.

He is a calm and confident leader in rallies and demonstrations, a fiery public speaker, a well-read ideologue, a lover of music and a great cook. Well, they say he is. I'm too finicky an eater to actually try his more complicated Ilocano dishes made up of, well, various vegetables. I'm not crazy for vegetables.

Ka Raffy is capable of compelling fierce loyalty, because to put it plainly, he is such a good person who is worthy of the highest respect. Approachable and light-hearted, he is, to young activists like myself, always a reliable presence who can give comforting but well-grounded advice. While an understanding and tolerant person, he is strict when it comes to the core activist principles and their application to work and living.

I am no end humbled and awed that such an evolved human being, a well-known and highly respected individual in the *kilusan*, sees it fit to trust me with his confidence and guide me through my political work and growth as an activist.

Though right now (and often in the last seven years) I give him headaches because of my stubborn nature, it is one of my life's highest ambitions to make *Ka* Raffy proud of me, because I am so proud and honored to say that what I am today and what I am capable of doing and achieving for the *kilusan* is largely because of his influence.

He is my Jedi master, and I hope never to be Anakin Skywalker but to be Obiwan Kenobi. He trains and teaches by example, and this, I think, is the best way to teach. He, along with Crispin "*Ka* Bel" Beltran, are the biggest political and personal influences in my life. From them I learn not only how to be an activist, but to be, hopefully, a good person.

Ina Alleco R. Silverio, 30, is a member of Anakpawis National Political Party and is editor of Hong Kong News, a bi-monthly bilingual newspaper for Filipinos in Hong Kong.

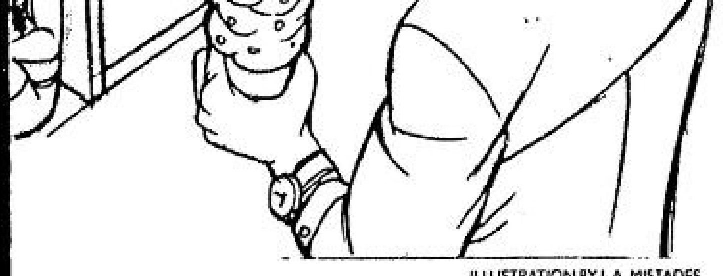

ILLUSTRATION BY L.A. MISTADES

LARGER THAN LIFE

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bU! Correspondent

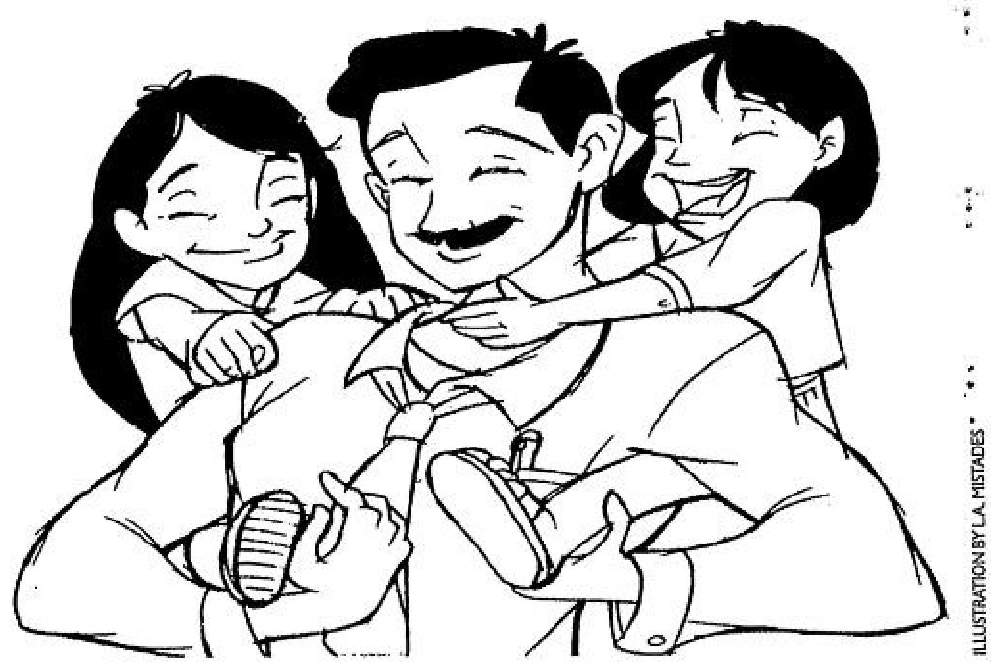

ILLUSTRATION BY L.A. MISTADES

WHEN MY SISTER AND I WERE STILL tykes, we'd climb on my father's back for piggyback rides.

To us, our father seemed larger than life. He could answer all our questions about history and current events, he could identify all kinds of trees, and he had a job that took him all over the world.

Though his work for the government was very demanding, it seemed he always had time for us. Late every night when he'd get home from work, he'd check in on us as we slept, and cover us with a blanket if it was cold.

In the morning, he'd kiss us goodbye before driving off to work. His frequent travels seldom bothered me, for I knew that there would be crabs, dried mangoes and even a pet parrot as *pasalubong* when he got home. If he had to go abroad, he sent postcards and brought back postage stamps for my collection.

Weekends were the best. While he read the Saturday paper, I'd sneak up behind him, struggle to read the headlines, and ask him what the editorial cartoon meant. Of course, I was too young to understand politics, but he always came up with some reply sufficient to satisfy a 6-year-old's curiosity.

In the afternoon, he'd drive me to the park and keep an eye on me as I rode my bike. I remember one particular Sunday when we built a kite made of newspaper and twigs. The kite didn't fly, though, no matter how much we tried to get it up. But it didn't matter—he was still our hero.

Hugs and kisses from him were plentiful, as were nuggets of wisdom. "Eat fruits and vegetables," he'd say whenever I pushed away the bitter gourd on my plate. Or this: "A good name is the only thing your mom and I can leave you, so study hard for your future and live your life with honesty and integrity." And, "Whenever you do something, do your best."

I think I learned the last lesson better than he had anticipated. I was in fourth grade and had just won first prize in a math contest. The moment he got off the car, I skipped over to him and proudly trumpeted my accomplishment. He probably had a busy day at work, since he merely brushed me aside by absent-mindedly muttering, "Good."

> Once, I tried describing my father to a friend, and I realized I might as well have been talking about myself

Later that night, my mom found me crying. I moaned that I didn't just deserve a "Good" for my efforts, but a "Very Good." From then on, whenever I'd tell my dad about an award, he was always careful to exclaim, "Very Good! Excellent!"

As I grew older, my father began letting me make more decisions for myself, confident that the values he had taught me would guide me along my way. I was free to chart my own destiny, from my choice of college course to a job.

Once, I tried describing my father to a friend, and I realized that I might as well have been talking about myself. We have the same nose, the same boisterous laughter, the same gregarious personalities, the same hearty appetites.

When we were still kids, my sister spitefully told me during a quarrel that I was an adopted child. I never asked my parents if it was true, but now I realize that I am too much like my dad to be an adopted kid. There is so much of myself that reminds me how much I am my father's daughter.

Today my sister and I are too big and heavy to clamber up his back for a piggyback ride. I am old enough to decipher editorial cartoons for myself, and to buy and fly my own kite.

My dad has changed, too. Now, there are lines around his eyes and more white hair on his head. But no matter how much things may change, my dad, my hero, will always be larger than life.

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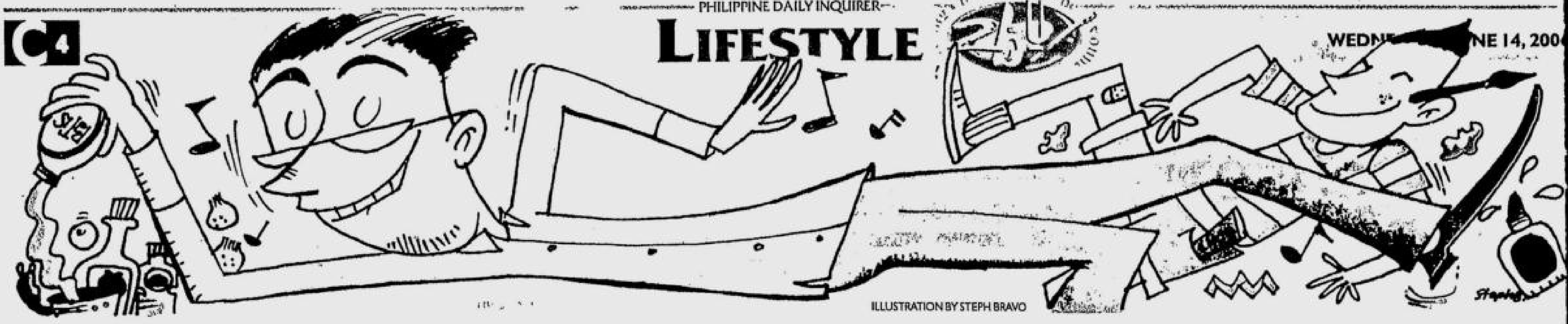

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My grounding figure

Like God, our fathers are also the reason why we are here, and why we can dare to be free

By Danicar Mariano
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN I MET FR. Bulatao, my mentor in hypnosis, he knew right away that I was a chip off the old block.

"Ah, you take a lot from your father, noh?," he said.

Father Bulatao is freaky that way, in the sense that he instantly knows things about you, things you aren't even conscious of, but you know deep inside are true.

How am I like my dad? I guess I take after his silliness. My dad likes dancing in weird ways when only family members are watching. This is something all my exes chided me about, when I did something similar in open spaces.

I'm also like my dad in that I know which kinds of flavors I want in food, and the art that goes into mixing food with condiments—that kind of appetite for life. And, like my dad, I want just the simple life, no frills.

I have always loved art, and one time, I was making yet another crazy art project. It involved crumpling the aluminum part of a chocolate wrapper into the shape of dots and waves and pasting them with glue on colored bond paper.

In my crazy 7-year-old mind, they represented several baby snakes and their eggs. I worked on my project the whole day and I was so proud when I finished pasting the last of those eggs.

Then I showed it to my dad. I told him how I wanted to give it to my older brother. He said, *"O sige,"* and then he smiled and hugged me, which encouraged me even though he probably didn't really understand what the piece meant.

My brother, on the other hand, said, *"Ang pangit!! Ano yan??"*

Although it might have been true that my snake-and-egg, wave-and-particle art left a lot of room for improvement, this incident proved an important point. My dad appreciated my art, even though he didn't really knew what it was, and he encouraged me to do it.

It gave me the courage to persevere in my creative endeavors, for, even though my work wasn't always accepted or liked, I was sure I had solid support. Because my father loved me well and buoyed me up, I could be creative. I could experiment. He was that grounding and leveling figure that enabled me to fly.

And as our fathers are often our model for gods, as Chuck Palahniuk says, this is how I look at God. As somebody who accepts you, and your attempts to be imaginative and creative even though the rest of the world may think of your attempts as rubbish.

He's a lighthouse showing where you can land when you get too tired of running around with all your projects. He accepts and understands that you are still on the road to greatness. But at the same time, he reminds you when you're too complacent, and when you're so sure of yourself.

I never really think about my father that much. I guess because I'm always sure of his devotion to me. As with God, we bask in his love, often oblivious to how it enables us to do so many things.

But of course, like God, he is also the reason why we are here, and why we can dare to be free, even sometimes at the risk of defying him.

MY FATHER, THE BLOG TOPIC

By Pam Pastor

July 28, 2003

My father the (super)hero

Last night, I was happily flipping through a magazine while talking to my cousins. But my heart stopped beating when I saw my father.

Or what looked like my father's picture in an international magazine.

Only it wasn't my father, I realized after a closer look. The guy in the picture looked exactly like him, except he was a little greener. The guy, not my dad.

It was a picture of the movie "The Hulk."

I showed the picture to my brother and my cousins and we all agreed the resemblance was uncanny.

I showed the picture to my father.

Did he get pissed?

No.

Now he wants me to find a poster-sized copy of the picture for him.

Feb. 2, 2004

Today, my father almost made me cry.

09
05
PM
Y d na u txt?

In the middle of the night, while working on a special project, tragedy struck.

My printer's ink ran out.

Realizing it would probably take me days to find the time to replace it, I texted my dad.

"Pa, you coming here later? Can you please buy me ink for my printer? Please please. Thank you."

After forlornly staring at my useless printer, I finally drifted off to sleep.

I woke up to a text message from him, telling me that he was at the mall buying ink and that he'd bring it over to the house in the afternoon.

In my rush to get ready for work, I failed to reply.

On my way to work, grandma sent me this text.

"*Isinaglit na ng* papa *mo ink mo di na bumaba nagmamadali babalik sa trabaho*"

I thanked grandma and sent an SMS to my father, expressing my gratitude. He replied seconds later.

"anytime *para sa* baby *ng* papa luv u 2"

And that's when I really cried.

See, I had a huge gap with my dad when I was growing up.

Blame it on my parents' separation, blame it on a lot of things, but for a long time I was convinced he didn't care about me.

I know better now.

I told grandma that the SMS made me cry.

She said, he really loves you so much he'd kill for you.

I said I know but I wasted so much time being blind to that.

She said it's not too late.

I said I really want to make up for the lost time.

And I would. I really would.

July 27, 2005

I know it's not Father's Day

"Sir, *nakilala ko na ang lalaking pakakasalan ko*!" someone said to one of the cool bosses in the office.

He walked up to us and said wisely, "*Kailangan niyong malaman na* love is not a feeling. Love is as love does."

"*Ano* sir? Lapdance?" someone else said.

He continued. "*Malalaman niyong mahal kayo ng lalaki hindi sa mga* text text. *Kung sinusundo ba kayo. Kung tinutulungan kayo maglinis. Kung ngayon pa lang, pinagpapalit na kayo sa inom, pag nag-asawa kayo, ganun din ang gagawin niya.*"

While he talked, I could imagine him saying the same thing to his kids, which made me a bit sad because I never had that talk with my own dad.

My relationship with my father is immensely better now than it has been in the previous years. I can proudly say I have let go of my childhood angst and unnecessary hatred. But it is a reality that we've never talked seriously about life, about relationships, about how I should deal with people.

Our last serious talk was maybe 12 years ago, right before he and my mom split up.

I tried to remember the last thing my father taught me.

And all I came up with is this:

"Ignore them."

He said that as I sat by his feet, bawling my eyes out after an ugly encounter.

"Ignore them."

It's not earth-shattering but it's a pretty good lesson to me.

Jan. 23, 2006

Oh no he didn't

Last week, while I was at a meeting, my father started texting me about my plan to host his belated birthday dinner.

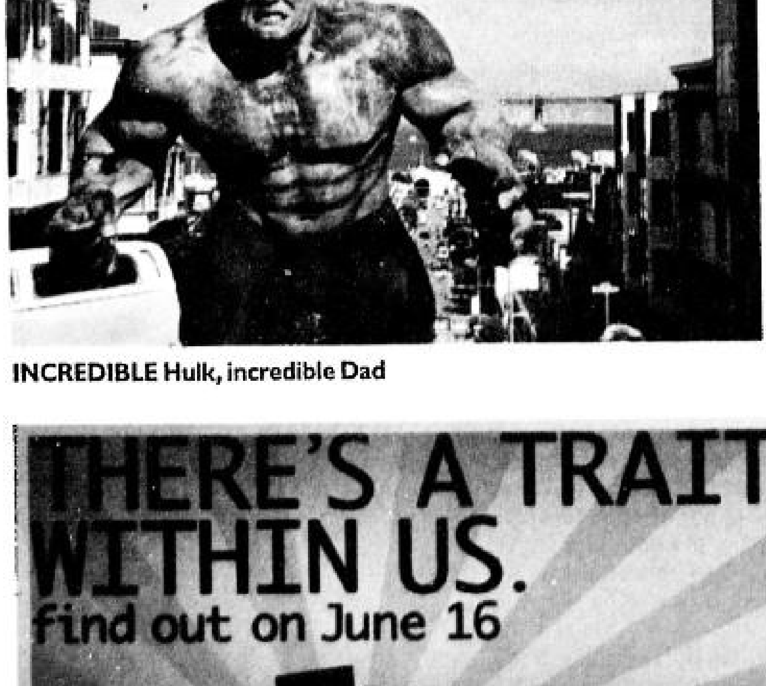
He said he wanted steak. I said I can do steak. Or even lamb.

Then he said something else but I didn't notice because I had become too engrossed in my meeting.

It is very difficult to concentrate on what someone in front of you is saying and even harder to try to say intelligent things when you are cutting meat on your plate and someone else is sending you little electronic messages about sacrificing lamb for a good meal.

Then my father did something horrible.

MY FATHER/ D3



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THERE'S A TRAITOR WITHIN US.
find out on June 16

A cinnamon story

By Andrea C. Perez

June 8, 2005

"Minsan, tumawag ako sa friend ko, Dad niya nakasagot, sabi sa 'kin "Anak, sandali lang ha?" Pare, sabi ko sa 'yo, tumulo na lang luha ko, promise. Korni pero 'di ko na maalala kung kelan ako huling tinawag na 'anak' ng Dad ko."

I CAN'T REMEMBER ANY time when you held my hand. I can't remember any Christmas present from you, either.

But that's okay, we've never been the typical dad-daughter team. I know you have lots of other Kids and you're quite old enough to be my granddad.

But I do remember you pinching my fat 8-year-old nape hard when you made *gigil*. That hurt much, but I wouldn't tell a thing because you scared me. You were a stranger, a weekend daddy who would sleep beside me on non-school days.

You loved *adobong pata*, *paksiw na bangus* and *ginataang tulingan*. And boy, you loved sweets. Not just once did I catch you sipping condensed milk straight from the can (before the diabetes was found, that is).

And your staple *pasalubong* were soft, fragrant fluffy cinnamon rolls. Most of the time, they were left untouched, though. *Kasi naman*, every week there were those rolls, as if they were the only ones available in the bakery.

You would have it with coffee, and I would watch you eat, wondering: "When will this man leave so that I could go back to my usual routine again? And he wouldn't stop pinching my nape."

You were a stranger, a weekend daddy who would sleep beside me on non-school days

We only traveled by ourselves once. You had me dress up, and we drove to your place in Pulilan in silence.

Driving on the highway, you noticed that my fingernails were long. Mom's fault, you said. So you pulled over and trimmed my fingernails with a blade.

I wonder how you did that without hurting me. *Kaso, nakakangilo. Yung ngilo na pag naalala mo, mangingilo ka ulit.*

That was the only time I got to visit your place. I met a cousin, we played on the grass. She taught me how to catch a dragonfly. How to tie its tail with a thread so you could hold it, pet it.

I wanted to take the blue one home, but it died.

Funny but you never shaved. You plucked.

It was some sort of a hobby: you sitting in front of the window (for proper lighting), with a small mirror on the pane, plucking your beard away.

You usually did this in your underwear, which was not the usual briefs or boxers. You wore undies in soft, flowing fabric. Were those satin? It's quite funny thinking about them now. I guess they're already out of production.

You always said a prayer before leaving the house.

Hmmm, *sa'yo ko namana yung pagiging balbon at kulot*. And man, a large part of my paycheck goes to my hair, and taking unwanted ones off the body.

I wonder how you would have been to me now had you been here. Would you have been proud of me? Would you help me deal with mom? Would you be mad if you know I've been smoking for seven, no, eight years?

Would you have approved of my boyfriend? Would you have saved me from months of crying when I was in deep sh*t trying to get over the ex? (Or would you have just smacked him in the head?) Would you think my apple-green suede boots are weird?

Masarap din siguro kung may tatay kang pagpapaalamanan kung gusto mong umalis. Yung meron kang lalambingin pag di ka pinayagan.

I've never met most of your kids. And I always do background checks on possible *"karirs." Kase naman mamaya kapatid ko yon.*

Don't worry Dad, I am way past teen angst. I just miss you loads.

It would have been different, though, if I had a dad who took care of me. You know, I might have become better.

I'm still wondering who would walk me down the aisle on my wedding day.

Just say hi to John Lennon for me. I love you, *Amà*. Here are some cinnamon rolls for you on your birthday.

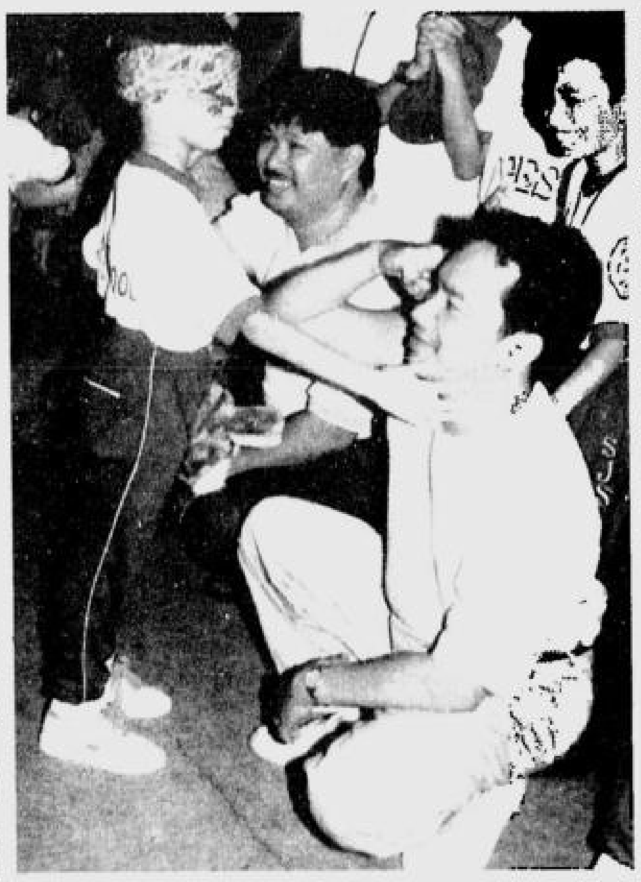
It's in the genes

By Isaya Mari D. Adefuin
2bU! Contributor

THE NOSE. *"EH KUNG ANAK KAYO ng mag-aasin, e hindi niyo sana nakuha ang ilong ng* Papa niyo." That was my mother speaking, explaining how Benedict A. Adefuin was unmistakably the father of her three children.

In Grade 4, we had the first school-wide Father's Day celebration. Papa and my sister, Aliya, who was then in kindergarten, joined a father-daughter contest. The children were blindfolded and were ushered around the circle of fathers, and they had to recognize their dad based on their physical characteristics: arms, ears, hair, etc.

By some mystery unsolved until now, Iya aimed at the nose. Instantly, she knew it was Papa. My brother Fossy and I burst into cheers. We were overjoyed, but it was short-lived. Papa and Iya were disqualified. However, the teachers took pity on us and decided to give us a T-shirt as consolation prize.



TO FIND our Papa, my sister Aliya reached for the nose.

The Adefuins—the progeny of Faustina Adea and Faustino Adefuin—are famous for their noses. They stretch from A to Z. But my siblings and I also have high bridges due to my mom's pointy nose.

This was a conversation I had in high school when I first met my distant cousin at the cafeteria. "Are you Isaya Adefuin?" "Yes. Well, how did you know it was me?" It was the first day of school, and it was packed with people. "Well, my mom told me something about the nose." "Oh well, the stuff of legend..."

The humor. Papa is silent during mealtimes, except when he's cracking a joke. "Ang Dating Doon" quips would be tomorrow's breakfast fare. In a crowd, he's not one to attract attention to himself. But he can roll out the punches. Although my mom has a wacky sense of humor (think green!) I think I'm more like my father in that aspect—often shy, *pero matindi humirit*.

According to our Finance AVP, "Okay *ka pala*, Aya, *hindi ko akalain na ganyan ka kasi mahinhin ka*." Why thank you, madam!

Papa's more talkative when he has had a drink. Just a few weeks ago, he was calling from L.A. *"Anak, eto na, may nakuha na akong ninong at ninang sa kasal mo."* "Pa, *hindi pa naman ako ikakasal* e!"

The cards. I was described in my high-school yearbook as having "a card collection that rivals National Book Store." If that were true, then I would have lost to Papa hands-down. If I were to collect all the greeting cards he had given us, it would be just as thick as my Perry's Chemical Engineer's Handbook and could whack anyone unconscious. I think Papa felt that greeting cards was a comfortable way for him to express his feelings.

The what-nots. I sit and sleep like a man. This is not to ward off my future husband. Mama had the scare of her life when she saw me one time and thought I was Papa—sitting on the *sala* at 5 in the morning, deep in thought, and *"naka-dekwatro."* Of course, I sleep *"naka-dekwatro,"* too. And I just can't sit in a cross-legged fashion.

Mama attributes this to my dad, especially our shared habits and mannerisms that irritate her—like making loud, clacking noises by dragging our feet on the floor.

The drive. Papa, unlike us, didn't have a privileged childhood. But he came from a very academic-minded family. My grandmother and late grandfather were intellectual heavyweights, so education was naturally a pursuit in life. He told my brother, in a letter, that his dream was to see his children surpass whatever he has achieved in life.

My siblings and I all excelled in school. I believe it was because my parents empowered us. Now that I'm working and on my own, I must admit I have my fears. Right now, I'm in marketing—a field that Papa dominated for 26 years.

The manager asked me during the interview, "Are you as good as your father?" I answered, "I sure hope I am. If not, I'm dead meat!" Okay, that last sentence was just in my head.

The love. I know that my parents are still much in love with each other after almost 25 years of marriage (it's their anniversary this June). *Kahit nag-aaway pa, tsk tsk* (smile).

I am grateful to Papa for being *malambing, maasikaso, mapagmahal* to Mama. My mother believes that someone was destined for her, and that's my father. I must say, she made the right decision.

THE AUTHOR with her parents

If I were to collect all the greeting cards Papa had given us, it would be just as thick as my Perry's Chemical Engineer's Handbook and could whack anyone unconscious

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Ei, Dad!

By Ralph Lopez
2bU! Contributor

I WAS RIDING A PEDICAB, PLAYING a cowboy while my father was beside me pedaling. This is my most vivid memory of time spent with my Dad. I do not recall if it was a Saturday or a Sunday, all I know is that it was a weekend.

My father bought me a toy gun complete with rubber bullets and a holster. After that moment, memories of my father are a blur. Although I can still remember how he looked, I think.

Sometimes when I'm looking at my face in the mirror, I'd look really hard, hoping I could see his face through mine. I am his son, anyway. I also can't help but wonder what my life would have been had my father not been killed. Maybe we would still be living in Laguna in our little square house. Where would I be studying? What would I be doing at this very moment if my father were still be alive?

Would I still be sitting writing a paper on my laptop? Would I even have a laptop? Maybe I would, but I'd probably be writing about a different topic, and maybe he would be right here beside me, helping me finish my paper.

The man who really made an impact in my life was my mother's older brother—my uncle. My mother got married before my uncle did. In fact, she was the first to get married among the five of them. That is why I am the oldest among us cousins.

My uncle is a tall guy, with big broad shoulders, so broad that he seems capable of uprooting an acacia tree. Despite his huge stature, he is a gentle man. And despite women going head over heels over him, he has stayed with one woman. I call her Tita Becky. He and Tita have been together since they were teenagers.

"Someday, I'm going to be just like him," I often told myself, growing up. In the morning, my uncle would be there, sitting beside my bed, waiting for me to wake up. Then he would carry me and bring me down to the dining room to eat the breakfast my *lola* had prepared for us.

He would almost always bring me to where he was going, or at least ask me if I wanted to go, whether it was to the gym or out with either Tita Becky or his *barkada*. And almost always I'd say yes, unless I was busy cooking with my *lola*.

Whenever I was with my uncle, I felt invulnerable. It was like no one could do me harm. I remember this one morning, maybe around 2 a.m., when I was awakened by a ruckus in our garage. I went out, but my mom told me to get back in the house. But curious about what was going on, I peeked out of the window in our *sala*, and I saw two strange men lying on the ground with legs and arms spread apart.

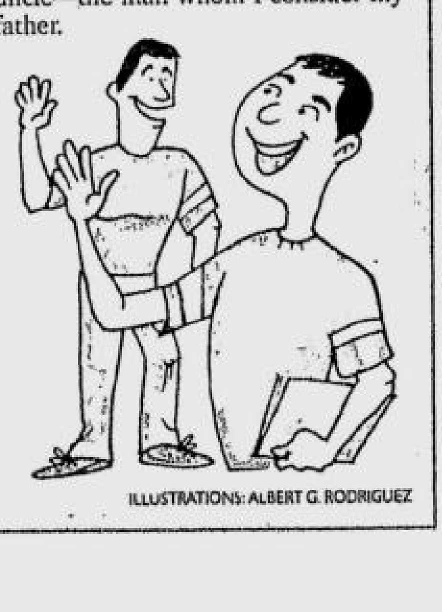
My uncle was pointing a gun at one of them, while one of our neighbors took care of the other man. Apparently the men were trying to break into our house. Luckily, they only got through the gate. All our neighbors were there, watching the scene and waiting for the police to arrive.

I never forgot that image of my uncle. It was like the finale of an action movie—the hero catching the crooks and protecting his family who was his whole life.

My uncle is not only good at tackling robbers, but is also good at tackling math problems. I remember when I was a kid, I was doing my math homework and there was this one problem that I really couldn't solve. I was so frustrated that I was already crying. My uncle passed by my room and heard my sobs and asked why I was crying. I showed him the math problem. He grabbed a chair, sat down beside me, and said we would solve the problem together. With my uncle's help, we were able to solve it in no time. He explained every step to me, so the next time I was faced with the same problem, I would know how to deal with it.

Now that I am a big boy, I try to be like my uncle. The way I look, act, think is very much like my uncle's. Whenever I am with people, I always want them to feel safe, because that was how I felt whenever I was with my uncle.

I also want to have all the answers to everything, because that's how my uncle looked to me—the omniscient one. And I want to be a hero to others, just as my uncle is a hero to me. My uncle—the man whom I consider my father.



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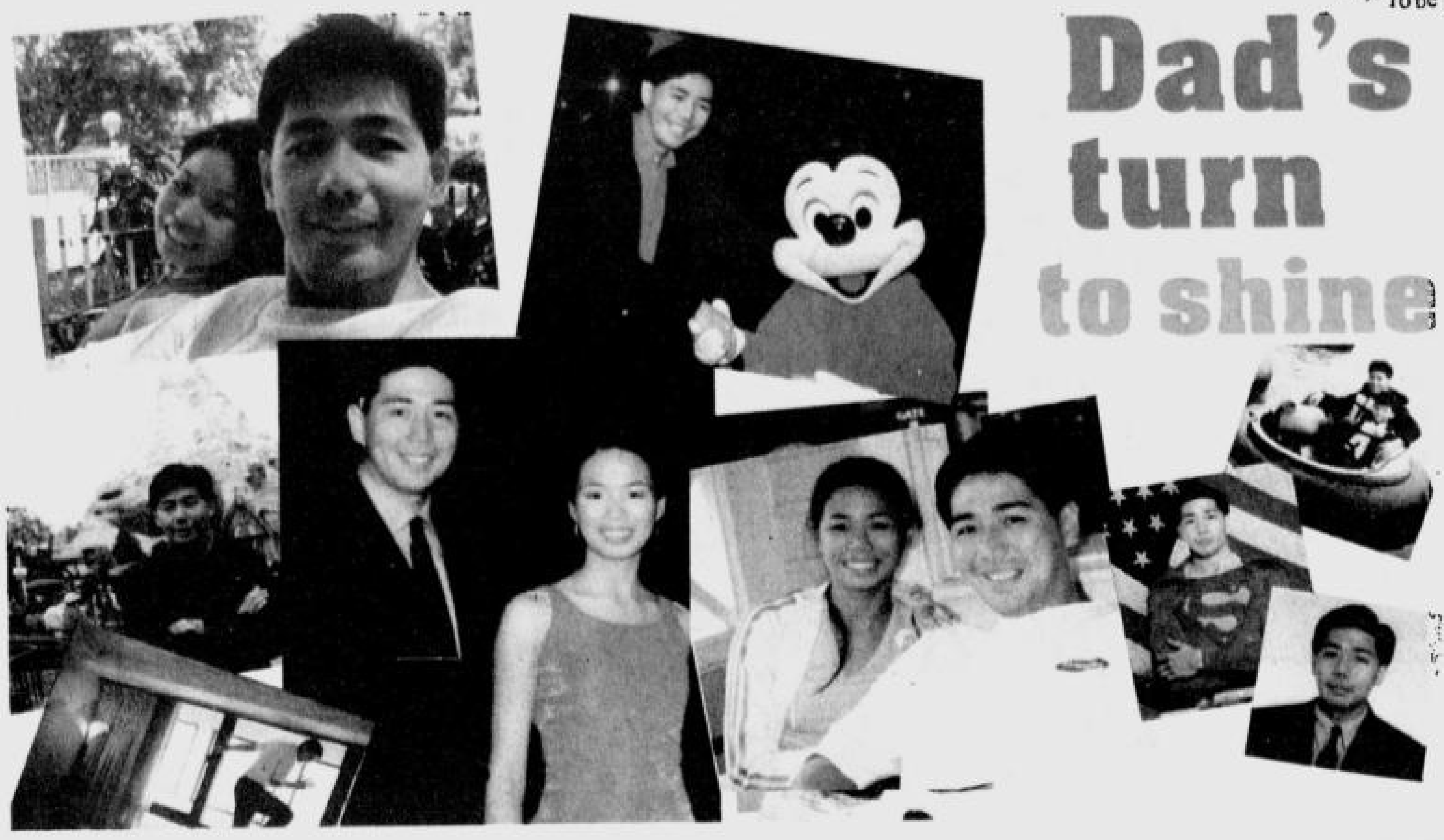


Dad's turn to shine

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

IN SPITE OF HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE THINGS that I do for 2bU! (such as picking me up from the airport after a trip, and getting me multiple copies of the paper for some articles), my dad—Lito Consunji—has never been on its pages, which says a lot about the role of fathers.

Many of them are content to watch their children quietly, and take pride in their achievements without announcing their own contributions to the world. Who, after all, has ever heard of a stage dad?

While he may not like all of the photos on the page (the Superman and fly-on-the-window photos might elicit a shriek heard throughout our entire village), these pics capture an aspect of him: the funny guy, the serious worker, the doting father, and the child at heart.

A lot of people might be surprised to find out that my dad watches old cartoons, loves going to Disneyland and craves for sweets like a kid, but those little indulgences are often quashed by the need to seem respectable to an often stodgy adult world—something that a lot of fathers can relate to.

In attending to their own children, they forget to take care of the things they liked to do when they were young. In their desire to see their own children achieve, they set aside their own interests. Like my dad did, many times over.

Happy Father's Day, dad. It's your time to shine.

My dad, the carpenter

By Jojo Carolino
2bU! Contributor

MY FATHER IS BASILIO CAROLINO SR.

During one of his birthdays, as everybody was prepared to see him blow the candles on his cake, we turned around and silently laughed as we saw him snoozing on the couch. He then woke up but asked to be taken to bed as he was sleepy, forgetting it was his birthday party!

I was saddened by the thought that time has eaten the strength and enthusiasm for life my father once had. So I am determined to thank him and tell him how much we love him at this time when he can still remember my name.

My father was a brilliant guy, a consistent valedictorian in his elementary and high school years. He had two brothers, and he was the eldest in the brood. When my grandmother got sick, he set aside his dream of becoming an engineer and instead took care of his mother. He worked on the side as a carpenter and helped to send his brothers to school. His brother, my uncle Cario, graduated with a Bachelor of Laws degree, and my uncle Miguel became a soldier.

We were raised poor, but my father was determined to send us to school. He worked as a carpenter and would go to other places where construction projects were. After weeks of being away, he would come home and give all his earnings to my mother. I remember my mother asking him, "*Hindi ka na ba ga kumakain?*"

He would make ice cream to be sold by my Kuya Bogs around the neighborhood. He was always doing something. He even made *suka* from the big *buli* tree at the back of our house, and made our coffee from coffee beans. But he never sold *suka* or coffee; he gave them out to our neighbors or passersby.

After years of hard work, friendship and good deeds, my brothers and sisters, all eight of us, have graduated from college.

To my dearest Tatay, Happy Father's Day. I promise to do good, as you have taught all of us. Thank you and we love you.

My Father. . .

From page D1

Something so horrible I thought twice about blogging about it.

He sent me this message:

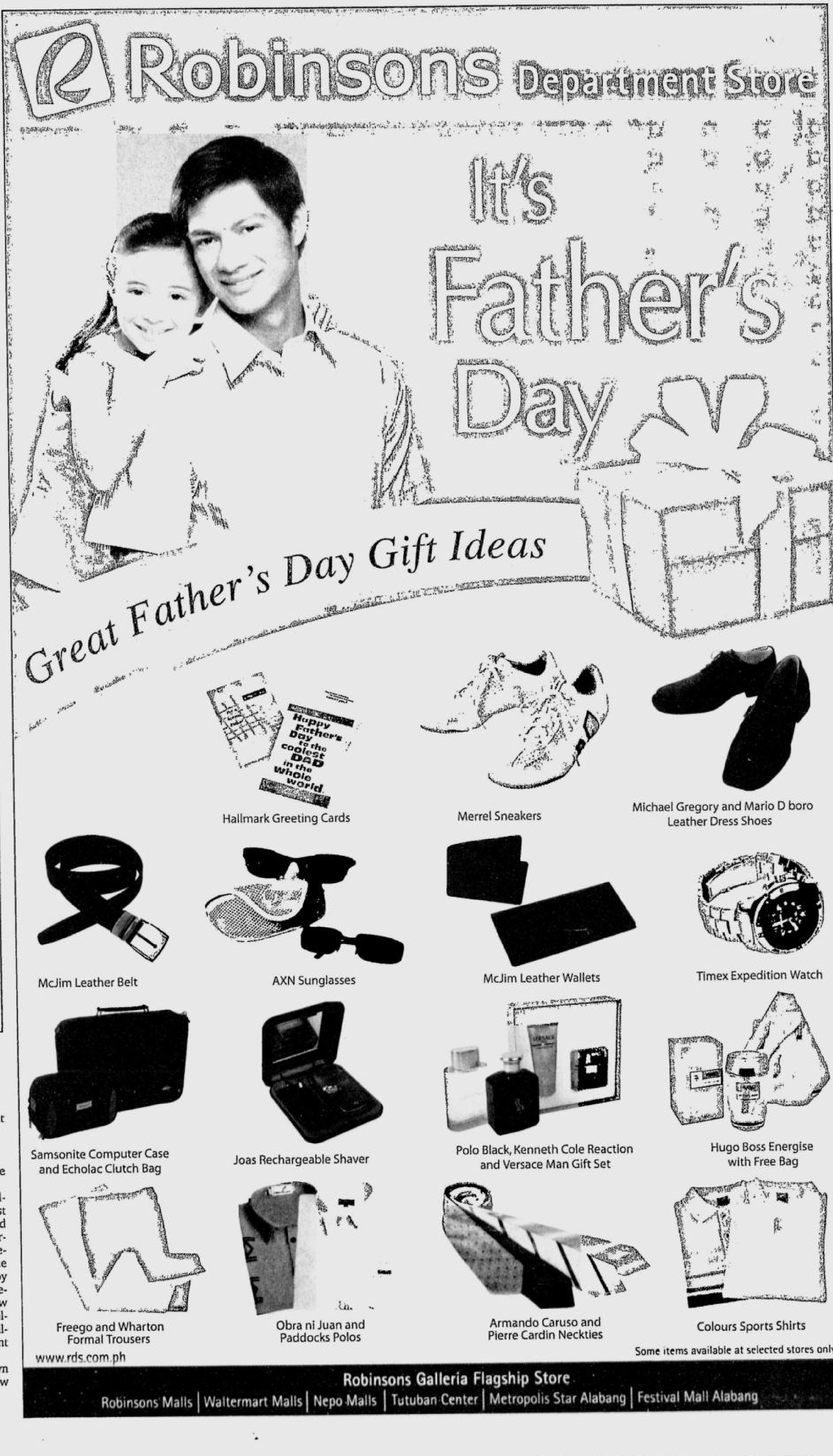
"Y di na u txt?"

Oh my god. I wanted to crawl under the table. Or disappear. Or both.

My father—the civil engineer who was always at the top of his class from the time he first set foot in school; the genius who has helped build malls and homes and buildings and certain parts of PGH and UP; the ex-hippie who became cool in my adolescent eyes by letting me rent gruesome horror movies on laser disc, by building a collection of over 500 CDs even before CDs became hot and by letting me borrow oversized shirts from his extensive Lacoste collection; the man who helped create three children—texts like an annoying prepubescent perky girl with pigtails.

And so I am making it my mission to sit down with him and have a serious talk about how NOT to text.

Maybe at his birthday dinner.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Here comes 3G

By Bernadette Joy Lopez
2bU! Contributor

MOBILE PHONES ARE EXPERIencing an identity crisis.

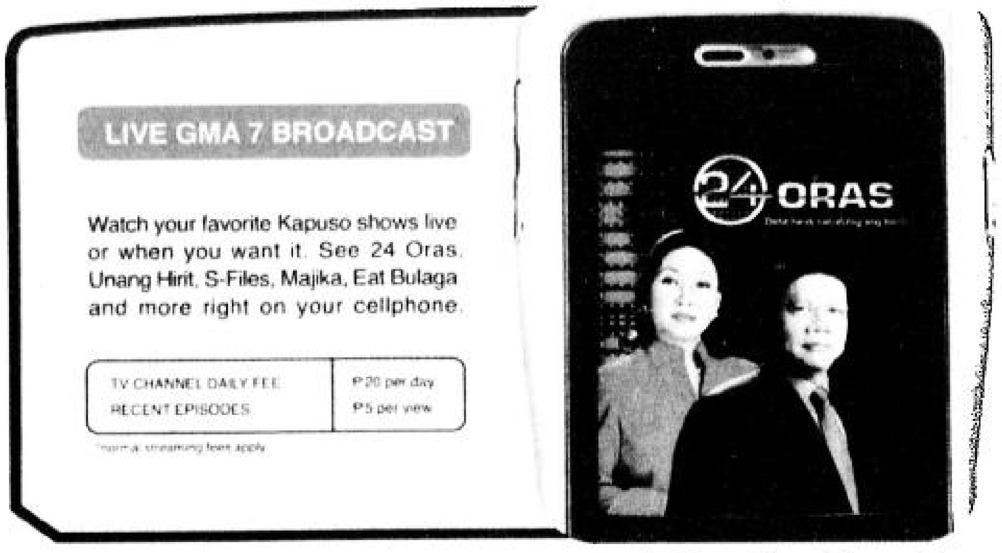
With the onset of third-generation (3G) handsets, mobile phones are poised to be more than devices for calling and sending SMS. With a 3G-capable handset (such as Sony Ericsson K 608i or Nokia 6680) and a Smart SIM card, you can render boredom obsolete.

Smart Communications recently unveiled the exciting new mobile features that come with Smart 3G technology.

"Why make a voice call when you can make a video call?" says Smart's Glenmarc Antonio.

Video calls, one of the more popular 3G applications, allows you to hear and see the person you are talking to via phone camera. An overseas video call, like an IDD voice call, costs $0.40 per minute, making a 3G handset an invaluable tool for those with relatives abroad, like families of overseas Filipino workers.

Smart subscribers can make video calls to 16 countries, including the United States, Japan and Hong Kong.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FOR a daily fee of P20 per channel, you can watch your favorite Kapamilya or Kapuso shows as they are aired on TV.

Call 1
3G
Options
Handset

VIDEO calls, one of the more popular 3G applications, allow you to hear and see the person you are talking to via phone camera.

Aside from being a hit with couples, video calls are also very helpful for parents who want to check up on their kids or spouses, and for long-distance education and even business. Antonio says companies can use video calls to check if their shipments have arrived.

Smart 3G is supported by the largest HSDPA-enabled (High-Speed Downlink Packet Access) network in the country. HSDPA allows a high-speed wireless connection of up to 1.8 megabits per second, a virtual "Smart 3G on steroids."

With Smart 3G, you can make video calls and data transfers not only to handsets but also to computers with a 3G/3.5G HSDPA card via PLDT WeRoam. Smart subscribers all over the country can also engage in HSDPA-powered video conferences with computer or 3G handset users.

With its extremely high speed, HSDPA also ups the quality of video streaming, web browsing and file downloads. "Internet browsing with 3G is actually 12 times faster than the normal GPRS," says Smart's Joy San Diego.

The pricing scheme is even better. "We're charging not per kilobyte anymore. We're charging P10 per 30 minutes, regardless of how many times you log in," San Diego adds. With price rates rivaling those of Internet cafés, more subscribers on student budgets can confidently surf the net using their 3G handsets.

Meanwhile, for the standard streaming rate of P15 per 30 minutes, Smart subscribers can now watch television shows, music videos, video clips and movie trailers on their mobile phones.

For a daily fee of P20 per channel, you can watch your favorite Kapamilya or Kapuso shows as they are aired on TV. If you just have to know the latest show-biz couple breakup or political mishap, you can catch recent episodes of GMA 7 or ABS-CBN 2 shows for only P5 per view, on top of the streaming fee.

You can also download a full music track for only P50 (no streaming fee required) and be entertained even with your eyes closed.

Smart 3G also offers live traffic feeds. For only P15 per 30 minutes, you can see real-time traffic situations in major roads in the city such as Kalayaan-C-5, Edsa McKinley, Mindanao Avenue and Congressional Avenue. You can easily plan how to get to school or the office the shortest time possible by avoiding slow-moving areas during the morning rush.

But before leaving the house, don't forget to bring your charger. With all its exciting features, your Smart 3G phone will surely need it.

My hi-tech phone doesn't lie

Fidelity is the best virtue of my Sony Ericsson W550i

By Gabriel H. Mercado
2bU! Contributor

IF THERE'S ONE thing Sony is good at, it's marketing savvy that foster recognition of certain lines associated with the brand. Mention "Trinitron," "Playstation" and even "Betamax," and we almost forget they're from one company. Nowadays, there's "Vaio" and "Cybershot," evoking product recall its competitors would kill for, and insatibale gadget lust among us.

Of these, the "Walkman" brand is one of the most valuable, continuing to go strong decades after birth. From the '80s till today, I've personally found a need to have a Walkman. I have been using an ancient one as a gym companion and I've bought a new one recently to use for interviews. Both lovingly cared for, both considered long-term investments, both representing what technology for me is all about—practical, meaningful machines that serve their purpose quietly and efficiently. A tall order perhaps, for the chunky orange W550i, the latest iteration of the respected Walkman name?

Where it's at

Before anything, an introduction is apt. The W550i is the younger brother (it has to be male) of the superior in features but pricier W900i and the highly successful candy-bar shaped W800i. The intended market is clear, with the orange changeable casing shouting out to the young crowd, and a unique "basket-handle" at the top and rounded bottom design.

Primary features include 1.3-megapixel camera, FM Radio (I've always wondered why there's no AM), Bluetooth, GPRS, USB support, IR, downloadable Java game compatibility, then rounded off with your standard Contacts and Calendar applications.

The biggest difference with its siblings is storage, with the W550i lacking a memory card slot but making up for it with 256 internal megabytes. Other notable differences are a 1.3-megapixel camera compared to its older sibling's 2 megapixels and more, plus a few niggling things here and there.

Where it isn't

Imaging ability has both pluses and minuses. The form factor lets you take pictures in the traditional holding position, with two hands centered across your face the way it's supposed to be. However, while complete with a bright photo light, video recording, 4x Digital Zoom and streaming, you can only coax so much from 1.3 megapixels. Sending SMS isn't a strong point, too, as the "*balisong*" method requires two hands to open lest you risk dropping it, and the submerged keypads are large but are difficult to "feel."

Typical of SE phones, the T9 dictionary and overall SMS experience requires concentration lest you misspell words, send to the wrong recipient, or cancel a message in the middle of composing, which is frustrating to say the least.

Strong points are aplenty. I've never enjoyed a game on a phone more than I've played Worms Fortress on the W550i. I played all 20 levels in almost as many hours at every opportunity I could, and wouldn't mind replaying again. Also for the first time I scoured the Internet for more games. Suffice to say the W550i scores big on the gaming front, which is perfect for its intended market.

All about the music

However, I reserve the best impression for last. Phone features are subjective issues. But the new line delivers as advertised.

The 256 MB is not a lot, but I've tried many mp3 players and realized that we only listen to a few songs at a time and hardly make use of the hours afforded by gigabytes of space, unless we're constantly on long trips or are completely antisocial.

In my case, the W550i handled both Black Eyed Peas albums and some give or take, and I often traded mp3s with my computer. Add to this the fact it costs only around P15,000, and the question of practicality is answered along with storage limitation.

"What you gonna do when it all comes out?" To Fergie, I can say the W550i works it by being a practical, purposeful entertainment machine. And that don't lie.

Bye, MPH. Hello, Mobile Philippines

MOBILE PHILIPPINES is the only magazine that specializes in featuring stories on personal electronic devices from phones to music players to laptops. Formerly known as MPH magazine, Mobile Philippines offers comprehensive device reviews, how-tos, tips and primers to make the most of your mobile devices.

The June-July issue of Mobile Philippines features a review of the Nokia 3250, Dopod 900 smartphone, Nokia 7380, the Sony Cybershot W50, and the Canon Powershot A430, among others. There is also a low-priced laptop shoot-out, a guide to installing Boot Camp for Intel-based Macs, and a comparison of available Wi-Fi services. On the cover is actress Cheska Garcia. Mobile Philippines is available at news stands for P80 beginning the third week of June.

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